

St Swithun's C of E VC Primary School  
Ivel Road  
Sandy  
Bedfordshire  
SG19 1AX



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20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

### **Information regarding school closures**

Dear Parents / Carers,

It is with sadness that today we close school for an unknown amount of time. I would like to say a huge thank you to the staff at St Swithun's who have been working tirelessly to make sure that we are ready to continue your child's learning at home. We might not get this right, first time, but we ask that you bear with us and that you do contact your child's class teacher via email if you experience any difficulties. Your children have also been amazing over the last few weeks and I am immensely proud of them all.

I have also attached a letter to your children today and I ask that you read it to them.

Whilst we are not in school I ask that our school community follows government guidance on social distancing and hand washing. Your children are used to washing their hands regularly and we hope that you will continue this at home too.

We have updated the school website to include a tab regarding the school closure. We will update this regularly with information and this will include all letters and links to general on line learning.

Lastly, I wish you all well over the next few weeks and months and please do look after yourself and your family. Stay safe.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Anita Whitehurst

Headteacher

Below are answers to some of the questions you may have about home learning and school for key workers:

### **How will you keep parents informed during this period of closure?**

We will send vital information out via Parent Mail in the usual manner. We have also set up a dedicated tab on the school website, called "School Closure". All letters that we send through Parent Mail will also be uploaded under this tab, and **all** other information will be uploaded to this same tab.

We will also add any home learning advice that applies to the whole school under the same tab, for example, whole school advice on keeping healthy or a whole school home learning challenge. Please do check this weekly as we will be uploading things regularly.



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### **How will my child receive work to complete while at home?**

We already used a system called Google Classroom in school for some classes, so this has been rolled out to all pupils in Years 2-6. This is an online system, which your children can access through any device that uses an online browser. Details of how to do this will be uploaded to the school website under the School Closure tab. Year 1 will use the Seesaw program that the children are already familiar with. Early Years will find their work uploaded to the school website, under the School Closure tab, and parents can check this each week for a new topic grid. Additional learning packs for Early Years pupils will also be available for collection at school, if you would like to collect one. This will be from Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March.

- Children will either have brought the website addresses and their login details home with them today by letter, or we have posted them to you. Please let us know if you do not receive this letter by early next week, and we will get the information to you.

This will all be new to many of you, and we understand some of you may be worried about how to access it. This is new to all the staff too, and we are also feeling uncertain of how to best use the system to support our children. Nothing like this has been attempted before, so we are all going to adapt and change practice as we move forward over the coming weeks. Please keep in touch with us and let us know how it's going and we will do our best to help, adapt and support you and your children as best we can.

On Monday can we ask you to find where the websites are, practice logging in with your child and ask them to show you how it works, as they have been practising! Work will begin to appear online from Tuesday morning, meaning that staff have the time needed to ensure that we make this work as effectively as we can. Thank you for your patience in this time, we just want to get it right for you and our children.

We will make lined books and pencils available to collect from the school office, during the normal school day, if you require these for your child. Please only come to school if you are healthy and no one else in your household is self-isolating.

### **How can I communicate with the school?**

If it is a general enquiry or you would like to contact Mrs Whitehurst then email the school at:

[schooloffice@stswithuns.cbeds.co.uk](mailto:schooloffice@stswithuns.cbeds.co.uk)

You can also phone us as you usually would.

For questions about the learning of your child you will be able to email your child's teacher directly. Teachers will check their email once during every working day and then respond to all enquiries. Please allow 24 hours for a response.

Each teacher's email is as follows:

[faye.wilkinson-smith@stswithunssandy.co.uk](mailto:faye.wilkinson-smith@stswithunssandy.co.uk)

[steph.burnham@stswithunssandy.co.uk](mailto:steph.burnham@stswithunssandy.co.uk)

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### **How do I keep my child active?**

We will be providing ongoing suggestions for all children to stay active and healthy during their time at home, which we will add to the school website. If you have a garden, make sure you spend as much time outside as you can. As long as self-isolation is not required, you and your family can visit parks and outdoor spaces, in line with the government's social distancing guidance.

Joe Wicks will also be providing a 30 minute home PE lesson every day, Monday to Friday. This can be found on his YouTube channel, TheBodyCoachTV. Let's see if we can all return to school even healthier than when we left!

### **Questions about the school's key worker provision**

#### **Who is a key worker and will I be able to make use of your school care during the closure?**

This information is detailed and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

We would like to point out some important guidance from the government about the need to keep the number of children in schools to a minimum:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.



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If there is no one at home to care for your children and you are a key worker then we are here to support you however we can. These are very challenging times and every member of staff wants to ensure that as many critical staff can get to work when they need to.

**Is the childcare you are providing flexible, or do I need to send them every day?**

The care we are providing is on a day by day basis. Any day a critical worker needs to get to work, and if no one else is in the home to care for them, we are here to support you. We will use a Parent Mail system each week to ask you to select what days you need care, and this is the best way to let us know. If a situation changes during the week, just phone the school and let us know. It is harder for us to manage without 24 hours' notice, as we have to manage staff, so please make contact with us as soon as you know your shift patterns.

**What will my child need to wear and bring to school each day?**

- All the children attending will still wear school uniform, which will hopefully help you with one less decision each day!
- All pupils can wear trainers to school, which means we can be active when we need to be.
- All children will need to bring their own water bottle. Please can we ask that this is washed each day to ensure good hygiene.

**What will the provision look like and what time will it operate?**

Breakfast club will run as normal should you require this, please book via school office in the normal way. The school day will run from 8.50-3.30 as normal. We have been advised by mini explorers that they will continue to offer their service for key workers. We will review this as time goes on.

The care we provide will be more like a play scheme than traditional school. But we will make sure lots of learning happens throughout the day that is appropriate for the children. We will also make sure that all reading, times tables practice and home learning is completed at school. This hopefully means that after a long day, key workers can come home and enjoy family time together, something we will all need.

**How will school lunches be managed and will breakfast club still take place?**

School will still be open for breakfast club from 8.00am, and we will continue to feed the children when they arrive if you need us to.

Lunches will continue to be provided by Dolce, our lunch provider, though on a more limited basis. The online dinner selection will no longer operate and instead on arrival at school, they will be asked if they want a hot meal or a school packed lunch. We will provide a vegetarian or non-vegetarian hot meal on each day, as Dolce want to support key worker families. Normal meal prices apply, unless a child has free school meals. You can also still send a packed lunch with your child.

All children who currently receive a free school meal can come to school to collect a "grab bag", containing a cold lunch, each day during the hours of 12.00-1.00. There is no need to commit to this and bags will be available to collect from the school. Please let us know if you usually have free school meals and do not want to collect food from school and we will distribute to others.

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**How can we make sure our friends and families are ok and safe while the school is closed?**

During these unprecedented and challenging times the safety and wellbeing of our school community are of utmost importance. At St Swithun's C of E VC Primary school, we have a **Safeguarding Team** who works to keep children safe both in and out of school. During this period of uncertainty, we will still be here to support both you and your family. If you are worried about the safety or wellbeing of yourself, a family member or anyone else, you can still contact the school office via phone or email. Emails will be checked daily and we can get in touch with you and help signpost you for where to get help. You can also contact Central Bedfordshire Children's Services on 0300 300 8585 or the NSPCC 0808 800 5000 to report any concerns or for further advice.

One final message from the whole team at St Swithun's, for all the smiles, all the gifts and all the support you shown us, we would like to say, "thank you".

Take care of each other, we will miss you all.

From everyone at St Swithun's Primary School