



# ST. ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## September 6<sup>th</sup> 2019 Newsletter

Dear parents

Welcome back to a new school year. A particular warm welcome to any new families to our school community. I hope you found the break a restful one.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome Miss Ruth Chong and Mrs Gabriella Cotton who are teaching in the Foundation Stage.

It has been wonderful to be back with your children this week. They look extremely smart. The children enjoyed a Bible Story WOW day today where they looked at a story from the Bible and completed a variety of creative tasks linked to it. These are on display throughout the school.

On Sunday we celebrate the feast of the birth of Mary, Mother of Jesus.

*Dear God, the birth of Mary's Son, Jesus, gave each of us the promise of salvation. Help us live the faith that Mary taught in accepting your will. May we have the strength to face all that discipleship requires and rejoice in the promise of salvation offered to each of us in and through Jesus' birth and life. Amen*

There is quite a lot of information in our 1<sup>st</sup> newsletter of the school year.

As we begin the school year I would like to focus on the importance of excellent attendance.

### **Why is good attendance important?**

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school, and to establish positive life habits that are necessary for future success.

Through regular attendance, pupils can:

- Build friendships and develop social groups.
- Develop life skills.
- Engage in essential learning and other school social events.
- Achieve to their full potential.
- Minimise the risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour and becoming victims or perpetrators of crime.

## **Attendance matters!**

Don't underestimate the importance of 100 percent attendance. Even one day missed can have an effect on learning:

- 98 percent attendance means four school days missed
- 95 percent attendance means 10 school days missed
- 90 percent attendance means 19 school days missed
- 80 percent attendance means 38 school days missed
- Five minutes late each day means three school days missed

The governing body and headteacher decide which absences are granted as authorised. Authorised absences are only permitted for valid reasons, e.g.:

- Illness
- Medical or dental appointments
- Religious observances
- Family bereavement

Wherever possible, parents should always try to arrange medical and dental appointments during school holidays or after school hours.

## **What are unauthorised absences?**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider essential or reasonable.

Unauthorised absences can include:

- Forgetting school term dates
- Oversleeping
- Absences which have not been explained
- Arriving at school after the register has closed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Keeping pupils off school unnecessarily or without explanation
- Day trips or family outings
- Problems with uniform/clothing
- Birthdays and holidays

## **Holidays during term time**

- The school **cannot** be expected to authorise an absence for a holiday during term time.
- Taking holidays during term time means that pupils miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. It will be difficult for pupils to catch up on work when they return to school.
- You could be fined if you take your child on holiday during term time.

## **Lateness**

Good attendance doesn't just involve being present in school – it also involves punctuality. You also have a responsibility to ensure that your child arrives to school on time, and stays in school during the day.

All pupils are expected to be in their classrooms at 8:55am every day. If pupils are not in their classrooms by 9:05am, they receive a late mark – this is an unauthorised absence. Please see further point below.

## How can I help?

You can help in many ways:

- Encourage good attendance by making sure your child goes to school regularly.
- Take an interest in your child's school work.
- Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of absence from school.
- Support our school in our efforts to control inappropriate behaviour.
- Inform us on the first day of your child's absence, and keep us updated throughout the absence period.
- Cooperate with our school to make sure your child overcomes any attendance problems.
- Discuss planned absences with the headteacher and apply for permission well in advance.
- Only take your child out of school during term time where the absence has been **authorised**.

## SAFEGUARDING

We recently had a Safeguarding and Health and Safety Audit and one of the recommendations was that all internal gates need to be locked at 8:55 when school starts. If you are late for whatever reason and arrive after **8:55** you will now need to sign your child in at the main entrance and we will ensure they are taken to their class.

## ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS AT ST ALBAN'S 2018/19

I wanted to share with you some of the key assessment data from last academic year and put it into the context of a national comparison

### Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

	St Alban's %	National %
Good level of development (GLD)	77.3	71.8
Communication and Language	90.9	82.2
Physical development	93.2	87.1
PSE	90.9	84.8
Literacy	77.3	73.4
Maths	88.6	78.5
Understanding the Word	95.5	83.9
Expressive arts/design	97.7	87.2

### Phonics (year 1)

	St Alban's %	National %
Met the Phonics Screening Check	84.4	81.9

### Key Stage 1 (year 2)

	School %	National %
Reading (EXS +)	77.8	74.9
Reading (GDS)	31.1	25.0
Writing (EXS +)	71.1	69.2
Writing (GDS)	20.0	14.8
Maths (EXS +)	80.0	75.6
Maths (GDS)	24.4	21.7

### Key Stage 2 (year 6) Attainment

	School %	National %
Reading (EXS +)	78	73
Reading (GDS)	27	27
Writing (EXS +)	84	79
Writing (GDS)	24	20
Spelling and Grammar (EXS +)	91	78
Spelling and Grammar (GDS)	44	36
Maths (EXS +)	80	79
Maths (GDS)	24	27
Combined Reading, Writing and Maths	73	65

EXS+ = Children meeting the expected standard or above for the test

GDS+ = Children assessed as working at a “greater depth” within the year group.

### Progress (Key Stage 2)

	School	National
Reading	+1.4	0
Writing	+1.3	0
Spelling and Grammar	+2.0	0
Maths	+0.8	0

As you can see, this data compares favourably with the national average. I would like to pay tribute to the tireless work of the teachers and teaching assistants at St Alban’s for the consistently strong academic results not only from last year but over the last few years. However, as I have repeatedly said, we recognise the importance of educating the ‘whole’ child. Academic excellence and acquiring a depth of knowledge for all children is one of our goals but we also try to nurture those special gifts which makes each child unique. This is something which we will continue to strive for during this academic year.

### **Class Routines**

A letter will be sent out next week with information regarding class routines, such as PE days and book bags etc

### **School Uniform**

The children have returned to school looking very smart in their uniforms. Summer uniform may be worn until October half term. When the children return in November, it will be winter uniform. Please remember children need to wear sensible black shoes. If children wear boots to school during winter; please ensure they have their school shoes with them to change into for indoor wear. Longer length hair needs to be tied back and no big bows please.

Thank you for your co-operation with this.

### **Permission slip/ contact details.**

If you have changed address or mobile numbers over the summer break, please notify the school office with the new information. It would also be helpful to have at least two emergency contact numbers.

If any permissions have changed, or simply if you would like to check we have the correct information, please contact Mrs Cartlidge in the school office.

Information is sent by text and email. If you receive a text saying an email has been sent and you do not receive it, again please contact the school office.

### **After School Clubs**

A variety of after school clubs are available.

Monday	Drama 3:45pm until 4:45 pm, starts Monday, September 9 <sup>th</sup> .
Wednesday	Dodgeball Starts September 11 <sup>th</sup>
Thursday	Central Soccer; Starts September 12 <sup>th</sup> .

### **Prayer Group**

May I take this opportunity to thank Mrs Tomlinson for her morning Prayer group sessions and the families who attended each week. Please note that these meetings will not take place this year.

I hope you have a lovely weekend!

Mr Monaghan

