



# St Dominic's Catholic Primary School

*We Learn and Love in Faith  
This term we celebrate...Generosity*

## Welcome Back!

### Dear Parents

Welcome to our new families, and it is lovely to see your children settling in well. Welcome back to our existing families. I hope you all had an enjoyable summer holiday with family and friends. We have been busy organising and tidying the school and I hope you can spot the changes. I would especially like to thank the teachers who have worked very hard over the summer to make their classes welcoming, well organised learning spaces for the children to return to.

The school is once more facing a period of significant change as our new teachers embed themselves into school life and get to know the children well. In the first couple of weeks they will be carrying out baseline assessments in reading, spelling, mathematics and writing so that they have a clear picture of the children's starting points after the summer holidays. This will enable them to allocate reading books and for us to organise them into their phonics and spelling groups. Please be generous and understanding with the staff as they settle into their new roles and responsibilities.

All teachers will be sending out letters at the end of next week outlining the specific arrangements for each class and sharing with parents the learning journey for our current topic, 'Up, Up and Away!' so that you have an insight into your child's learning for the term ahead. We will also post this information on to our website.

**Early Years:** This term we have opened the doors to children from aged three to our Early Years class. This is still a small class where the children are in a welcoming, enriching environment where we are confident that they will thrive.

**Beginning of School Year Mass:** At the moment we are looking to Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September for the first school Mass of the year. More information to follow.

**Start and end of the school day:** We will continue with the soft start this year and the gate will be open from 8.40am to enable children to come into school, where teachers will be there to greet and meet them. Please ensure that your child comes into the school building safely. We will have a member of staff on the playground from 8:40am to guide them into the building and to assist with this. A second bell will go at 8:55am when the school day will start. At 3:15pm, the end of the school day, teachers will bring children to the school playground to hand them over to the adult who is collecting them. Please ensure if this is different to usual that the school office and the class teacher are aware as we are unable to let children go with another adult unless we have clear instructions to this effect. Please let the office know if you are unexpectedly delayed. We ask that children remain standing with their teacher until they are collected and they are not allowed to run around and play so that we can keep them safe. Once your child has been handed over to you on the playground they are then in your care. Please ensure that you are aware of what your child is doing at all times, especially if you are engaged in conversation. I would also be grateful if you could be extra vigilant of the school gate to ensure that your child does not gain access to the road without you.

**Phonics/Spelling:** Children will be put into a phonic/spelling group based on their learning needs. This is to ensure that we are able to effectively differentiate and offer the appropriate challenge for all children across the school. Teachers will oversee the setting of work for these groups, and they will be assisted in teaching to the different groups by the teaching assistants. This will mean that some children may be in spelling groups with others from a different year group. Spellings will be set each week for children to learn and dictation practice will also be given as this is an important part of the national curriculum. These groups will be in place by week commencing **18<sup>th</sup> September** when children will bring their spellings home. They will also be given their maths passport and a letter will come home to parents explaining this and giving their maths targets. Once you receive this information, if you have any questions, please arrange a time to have a chat with your child's class teacher.

**Homework:** I am currently reviewing the homework policy with teachers and we will let you know which days you can expect your child to receive homework and when it is due in. We will be taking a whole school approach so that if you have children in different classes there is consistency. The children will have reading, spellings, maths targets to practice and Mathematics. These will be set each week and we would be grateful if you could support your child in ensuring that all tasks are completed. If your child does not have access to a computer for completion of Mathematics please let us know.

**Home/School Agreement:** During the Autumn term we will be sending out home school agreements to parents so that we can all work together effectively in partnership.

**Warm Welcome to Barbars Staff:** You may know that our out of school clubs had been run by BarBars. From the 1<sup>st</sup> September this is being run by the school and we are delighted that Mrs Lowe and Mrs Wheatley have joined the St Dominic's team.

**Out of School Club:** A booking form for breakfast and afterschool club will be published for the next term in early October. Ideally, places should be booked this way if you know your requirements in advance. However, places are available for this term if you need 'ad-hoc' care which can be arranged through the school office, and you will be billed separately. Places can be paid for with various children vouchers, or via ParentPay.

**Sports provision:** We are delighted to continue to offer the sporting opportunities from Montagu Academy. The coaches will be in on a Tuesday morning, working with classes.

Years 2, 3 and 4 will begin swimming on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September, and further details of this will be sent out to those parents. Many of you will know that class 3 have been swimming for a number of years, and I would like to include the younger children as I believe that it is an important life skill. Year 1 will also get the opportunity to go later in the year, and during the summer term we will also help to improve the children's skills in class 4 if they did not achieve 25m whilst in class 3.

Here are some school routines which the new families may find useful, and will serve as a reminder to our existing families.

**Newsletters:** This letter has been printed for parents, but it will usually be published on the school website, with a copy on the notice board and some hard copies available from the foyer. A text will be sent to all parents so that you know when it has been published.

Please note that you may still receive other letters, such as ones specific to your child's class, in paper form.

**Text Messaging:** The mobile number of the first contact for each child (usually the mother) is used for the text messaging service. It may be useful for a second parent or carer to receive messages, and if this is the case please let us know.

**Further School routines:** Children are asked not to come into school before 8:40am, unless of course they are at breakfast club. Parents should not come through the hall to the classrooms, and can leave messages via the office. The front gate and back door will be locked by 9am. If you are late (after 8:55am), please bring your child to school through the front door, where you will need to sign them in at the office. This way we can ensure that all children and adults are signed in or registered correctly. Please make sure that your child/ren are in school by 8.55am for the best start to their day.

With regard to the walk to the school from the car park, some parents prefer to walk through the church grounds and up the hill, rather than along the car park entrance. If you choose to do this, please can I ask that you walk up the hill to cross the road directly opposite the front gate. When driving to school, please be mindful of pedestrians between these two spots. The parish have asked that the children do not climb or jump off from the church walls, thank you for your cooperation.

**School Office:** If you have any queries you are welcome to come to the office, but please do so via the 'hatch' in the foyer, and not through the school. Please be mindful that it is for your children's safety that these measures are in place. You will notice three postboxes in the foyer that you may use – one for messages and/or slips for the school office or governors, one for PTA and one for Out of School Clubs.

**Drop Off/Collection:** Please follow a one way system when dropping off or collecting. Come up St. Mary's Hill to park in the car park and drop your children off. On exiting, please turn right out of the car park, and either turn left at the

top into Cow Lane and rejoin the A46 at the bottom, or turn right for Woodchester. As the roads are very narrow around the school, this system helps to ease congestion. Please do not pause on the zig zag lines to drop your children off as it is dangerous for other children crossing the road, and also prevents others from entering the car park. Please also do not stop before the zig zags as other cars find it difficult to pass, so if you must stop on the hill, please do so after the zig zags. You will notice the sign on the hill reminding people to drive slowly past the school. Thank you for your co-operation.

**Parking in the Parish and School Car Park:** You will notice that the car park can become very busy. Please can I ask for your consideration and park neatly, and not to park in the entrance driveway. Can I remind you that this is the Parish's private car park which school members are allowed to use. You may find it useful to car share with another family in order to ease the congestion.

**Data Collection Sheet:** These are being sent home with this newsletter, and you should receive one per child. Please check the information we hold for your child carefully. If any details need amending, please do so on the sheet and return it to the office. Please would you also check that we have the correct method of transport, ethnicity and religion for your child, as this information is gathered by the County and Diocese. You may also wish to update/add the people who can be contacted in an emergency.

Please also check that we have your correct mobile phone numbers. Apart from being able to contact you in an emergency, the school uses a text messaging service. Please would you also provide home and work numbers where applicable, as it is very useful for school to have alternative numbers when one cannot be reached. Regarding travel arrangements, only one can be recorded so please let us know your most frequently used form of transport. You do not need to complete the route taken.

If all the information is up to date, you do not need to return the form! Please hand in any amendments by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September, after which time we will assume that the information is correct. Thank you.

**Forms:** Permission forms for pictures, and for going into the locality will also be sent home, along with a privacy notice. Please take your time to read them, and sign and return if necessary.

**Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM):** Just to remind you that all infants (reception to year two) can have a school dinner free of charge, as part of the UIFSM initiative. You can of course send your child in with a packed lunch, but we would like to encourage your child to have a school dinner. You can see the [lunch menu](#) for this term on our website. The children choose which option they will have on the morning, and it would be helpful if you would please ensure that your child knows which option they would like before they come to school!

Please can I remind you that UIFSM does not replace being eligible for Free School Meals, and so if you are currently getting one of the following benefits, you will be able to claim:

- Income Support
- **Income-based** Jobseeker's Allowance
- **Income-related** Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, **provided you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit**, and have an annual gross income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

Being eligible for Free School Meals means that your family can gain access to other help, and your children can benefit from other support at school through 'Pupil Premium'. This additional support can be in the classroom, in subsidising any trip contribution, music tuition and instrument hire. Pupil Premium lasts for six years after you are no longer eligible for Free School Meals, which would most likely mean that they would have the benefit of this well into secondary school. You can access the application process [here](#), or pick up a form from the foyer.

**School Uniform:** Please label all uniform and PE kit. The lost property box is at the back of the hall where all unclaimed, unlabelled uniform goes.

The children may wear the summer uniform up to half term, as long as the weather allows.

**Drinks:** Please send your child in with a labelled water bottle, so that they are able to have a drink throughout the day. Bottles can be refilled from the water cooler in the hall. You are welcome to send your child in with a flavoured drink for lunch, but the bottle for the classroom needs to be water.

**Healthy Snacks:** A reminder that school has a healthy snack policy. Children in classes 1 & 2 are provided with a free piece of fruit a day, children in classes 3 & 4 can purchase fruit through school, or children can bring their own from home. Sweets and crisps are not appropriate.

Milk is also available, through a scheme called 'Coolmilk'. If you have access to the internet, you can register your child at [www.coolmilk.com](http://www.coolmilk.com). This link can also be found on the schools website. The milk is free if your child is under five or entitled to free school meals, or around 20p per day otherwise. Please note that all milk money is dealt with by Coolmilk and not the school. If your child is entitled to free school meals and would like this, please come to the office.

**School Photographs:** The photographer will be in school to take individual and sibling photographs on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September. If you have any younger siblings not at St Dominic's you would like to be included, the photographer will be in the school hall from 8:15am so that these photos can be taken before lessons.

**Dinner Money:** The cost is £2.28 per day. All junior parents should be paying via the internet using ParentPay, and accounts must be kept in credit please. New parents to the school will be receiving registration forms shortly, as the school also uses ParentPay for trip contributions. If you do not have access to the internet you can request a Paypoint card or request to use a school laptop from the school office.

**Term Dates:** Term dates for 17/18 are available on the school's website, with some copies available in the foyer. Please remember that our dates vary from the County's dates, especially around Christmas.

**Music Tuition:** If you would like your child to start a musical instrument such as violin, guitar, trumpet or piano, or would like more information please come to the office. We can request teachers for different instruments in to school if there are more than two children who would like to learn another instrument, and so please let us know if your child would be interested in learning one such as clarinet.

**Clubs:** Clubs information for this term will be sent out shortly. Clubs will commence from w/c 19<sup>th</sup> September. If any parent or carer would like to run a club, such as gardening, please get in touch. You will need to undertake a DBS check, which school can arrange.

**Medicine Administration:** From time to time it may be necessary for your child to take medication whilst your child is at school. In this case, a medicine administration form needs to be completed, and you would come to the office to do this. The medicine must be brought to school by a responsible adult and handed in to the office or class teacher. It must NOT be brought in by a child.

If a child needs medication on an ongoing basis, eg for asthma or diabetes, this medication is kept in the class cupboard where the child will have access under adult supervision. Health Care Plans for this academic year for children with conditions such as these will be sent home. Please complete and return to school quickly, thank you.

**Vaccine Update/Reminder:** To give your child the best protection against Measles, Mumps and Rubella a child needs two doses. This is because the vaccine does not always work fully the first time. Therefore if your child has not had a second MMR as part of pre-school vaccines, I would encourage you to do this now by contacting your GP/Practice Nurse.

Children from reception to year 4 are also eligible for flu vaccine this year.

Further information can be accessed from the following website

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pages/vaccination-schedule-age-checklist.aspx>

Jacqui Sollars

### A time to reflect... *Generosity*

Teach me, Lord Jesus, to be generous:  
to serve You as You deserve;  
to give, not counting the cost;  
to fight, not heeding the wounds;  
to toil, not asking for rest;  
to labour, not seeking any reward,  
save that of knowing that we do Your will.  
Amen

### Dates for your diary...

**Wed 13<sup>th</sup> Sept:** Swimming for year 2-year 4  
**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> Sept:** Individual photographs  
**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> Oct:** End of term 1