



Archdiocese of Birmingham
ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Vivian Road, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 0DN
Telephone: 0121- 464 2141 Fax: 0121-464 8312
Email: enquiry@stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk
www.stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk
Headteacher: Miss H.M. Cusack M.Ed.



7th January 2021

Dear Parent

Remote Learning

Firstly, on behalf of our teachers who are working really hard to remotely educate your children, I want to thank those of you who have expressed your thanks and admiration for what the teachers are doing. Our gratitude for your appreciation and support is, quite frankly, huge!

We are at the very beginning of this second lockdown and have upgraded the quality of our remote learning from last year quite significantly. Although it is not ideal, neither are the circumstances we find ourselves in. This pandemic has caused much misery and loss for too many people. It has stretched people to the limits and caused fear. What we cannot allow it to do is to undermine the positive steps we as teachers, you as parents and, significantly, those key people at the front line are taking to diminish the 'poverty' of our lives as they currently are.

We are fulfilling the requirements of DfE regulations for remote learning and are going above the minimum requirement. We will adapt and develop what we offer as we become more accustomed to teaching in this remote way. We have limited resources i.e. internet issues that can restrict our endeavours – lost connections, buffering etc. for face to face connections. We have, however, been determined to offer equitable service to all our children and families by being mindful of the many differing situations you find yourselves in. Lack of device access and spaces in homes curtail the access of so many of our children and so, we have timetabled live sessions to account for this. However, we are certainly not short of committed and extremely diligent teachers who are working long hours to manage this remote schooling – be it 'live', recorded or via a PowerPoint/ specific tasks. What you see, and your children experience, is the end of much time, thought and planning.

I do not underestimate the pressures within the home of those of you who are juggling children, work and, perhaps, your own fears of the future. We understand, and face the same anxieties in our own home lives, and know you would change things if you could – so would we! We must work together and feed the children with positivity and hope if they are to be optimistic about their future. Please be patient and bear with us as we strive to provide the best that we can in a bad situation.

We continue to receive requests from parents who say they are key workers and their children should be in school. We do not have the capacity for the number of requests coming in. The pressure of this on our staff will result in teachers not being able to provide home learning that we currently are, because we cannot do everything! We are in LOCKDOWN – children are safer at home. The school is not meant to be fully functioning because this makes us all vulnerable which will jeopardise the provision we are making for genuine **frontline** key worker parents and will likely result in a prolonged closure. If you work from home – as many people are doing - your children should be at home with you.

So, again, thank you to all those of you who support us in supporting your children. They, and we, are blessed.

Yours sincerely

H M Cusack

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Headteacher.