



11th December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Mark 13:33-37

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah,^[a] the Son of God,^[b] ² as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way"^[c]—

³ "a voice of one calling in the wilderness,

'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"^[d]

⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶ John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with^[e] water, but he will baptize you with^[f] the Holy Spirit."

This is the second Sunday of Advent; John the Baptist preaches forgiveness. This is one of the special gifts of God, and one of the big celebrations of Advent. We are a forgiven people, and we welcome the forgiveness of God. We are firstly grateful for forgiveness - that we do not have to carry forever the burden of our sin, meanness, faults and failings. God covers them over in mercy.

Christmas Break

The school will close at 1:30 pm on Friday, 18th December for the Christmas holidays for Reception to year 6.

The school will close at 11:30 on Thursday, 17th December for the Christmas holidays for Nursery only.

Change to the School Calendar

After a thorough review of the current phonics and early reading provision, we will be changing the current programme that the school uses to teach phonics. In the new year, we will begin to use the Read Write Inc (RWI) programme which is used by many schools in the local authority with great success. Read Write Inc is a structured synthetic phonics programme - designed to

ensure all children learn to read accurately and fluently. Comprehensive planning is provided for teachers so they can channel their energy and creativity into teaching fun and engaging lessons. In order to implement this phonics programme all staff need to be trained therefore we will be adding an additional inset day to our calendar; **so the school will be closed to pupils on the 4th and 5th January 2021 and will re-open on Wednesday, 6th January 2021. In order to make this day up we will return one day earlier from our Easter break on Wednesday, 14th April 2021.**

School Bags

We realize that the children have found it very difficult not taking home reading books. The school has invested in lots of books to develop children's reading independence and to develop their love of reading, so it's really important that we are able to share these books with the children. As a result, from Wednesday 6th January 2021, we will return to having school bags in school. The children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are encouraged to have the St Michael's school bag; children in years 3-6 may bring a school rucksacks; however, bags will be used only for reading books and essential letters/notices at this point. Due to the current circumstances, we need to try to mitigate any risks associated with bringing in items from home; therefore, we will not be sending home reading records at this point for parents to sign and return when they have read with their children. **Reading books will be handed out/changed on Mondays only and need to be returned on Thursdays only. Books will not be dealt with outside of these times.**

Christmas Cards

Unfortunately, we are not able to allow the exchange of Christmas cards this academic year due to the current circumstances. I realize that some parents may want to exchange gifts with other children or thank the teachers with a token Christmas gift; we will permit this to happen in the spirit of the season. However, the staff do not expect gifts and would be perfectly happy with just a kind word that acknowledges their effort particularly at this difficult time.

Christmas Lunch

This year the children will be having their Christmas lunch on **Wednesday, 16th December**. The children will eat Christmas lunch with their teachers in their bubbles. It will be a festive event and we would encourage all children to have a school dinner that day.

Christmas Jumper Day

Christmas Jumper Day will be on **Wednesday, 16th December**. We are inviting all pupils to take part by wearing a Christmas jumper and making a £1 donation. Payments can be made on the school money website.

Coronavirus Update

Lockdown has ended and we will return to a system of 3 tiers; London is currently in tier 2 so we need to all be mindful of the restrictions within that tier. We need to continue to be vigilant to ensure that we all remain safe. Please continue to support the school rules and expectations to keep us all safe:

- Please ensure that you are practicing social distancing at the gate in the morning and for pick up at the end of the day.

- Parents need to drop off and collect their children promptly.
 - ❖ Nursery - 8:30 - 11:30
 - ❖ Reception - 8:30 - 3:05
 - ❖ Years 1 and 2 - 8:40 - 3:15
 - ❖ Years 3 and 4 - 8:40 - 3:15
 - ❖ Year 5 and 6 - 8:50 - 3:25

Please do not enter the school premises if you or a member of your household are showing symptoms of coronavirus; this includes if you are waiting for a test result. The most common symptoms of coronavirus are recent onset of:

- a new continuous cough and/or
- a high temperature and/or
- a loss, or change in, your normal sense of test of smell (anosmia)

If your child does develop symptoms at any point during the school year you should seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/or-by-phoning-111>.

If a child has symptoms of coronavirus they should get a test. If this is not possible, then the child should self-isolate for 10 days. If your child is not in school, please call the school to let us know why they are not in school so we can track absences and follow up as appropriate. **If your child is off with coronavirus symptoms we need to know for the safety of the entire school community.**

God Bless.



N. Scott
Head Teacher