

# St Mary's Lewisham CE Primary School

Headteacher: Ms Christine Bernard

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## "St Mary's is a good school" - Ofsted July 2016

### Our Vision

*To be a learning community that promotes the unique gifts, wellbeing and potential of every person. Our work is founded on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, building on His message of equality, peace and justice, guided by His words 'As I have loved you, so you must love one another' (John 13:34).*

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

I hope that you and your family remain safe and well. It is hard to believe that I am writing to you to mark the end of the school year. As I reflect on a year that nobody could have imagined last September, despite the many challenges we have all faced, I remain so proud to be the Headteacher of our wonderful school community and each amazing, unique child. I thank each of you for your support with home learning, the return of some 'bubbles' of children to school and the appreciation that you have shown to St Mary's during the Covid-19 pandemic.

I appreciate that you will be keen to learn more about the return to school in September. Firstly, I can advise you that no children will be returning in the first week of September. This will enable us to ensure that the school has had a thorough deep clean, that all hygiene and safety requirements are in place and that staff are fully trained in the new routines and curriculum that will be required. We will continue to follow all Government guidance and risk assess. As I am sure you can appreciate there is still much work to do as the guidance is continually updated and we will have to react to National and Local changes over the next two months.

Children will be invited back from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September – **however we will NOT be inviting all children back on the first day**, in order for us to maintain social distancing and to support transition to their new class routines. In consultation with our Governors and the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education, we have agreed to stagger the return of children in September. This means that children will have different start dates during the week beginning 7<sup>th</sup> September. Our provisional aim is to have all children in school by the end of this week. Further details regarding the start date for each child and the arrangements that we will have in place to ensure the school is as safe as possible will be communicated as soon as our plans are finalised in late August / early September. Arrangements for children in Nursery and Reception class will be communicated separately.

To help children prepare for the new school year, we have organised a Meet the Teacher event for next week. Please contact the school office if you have not received a text message with your appointment times. To support some of our families over the summer, we have arranged for free school meals vouchers to be sent out and have financed summer play scheme places with the Fit for Sports organisation. I must finish by thanking each member of our passionate and dedicated staff team, our governors and the volunteers (including many of our parents) for all that you have given this year to make St Mary's the best we can be for every child. Even at the darkest times, we must continue to reach out to each other in Faith, Love and Hope. I deeply look forward to the day when I can welcome you all back to school and celebrate our school community.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Bernard, Headteacher



St Mary's is an Excellent School



## FOOD BANKS - IMPORTANT INFORMATION

We appreciate that for some of our families, this is a challenging time and you may require extra support with receiving food. Please see some useful information from Lewisham Foodbank below:

If any families need to get referred to us over the summer, they can use this national foodbank helpline which is run by Trussell Trust and Citizens Advice - 0808 208 2138.

The Lewisham Council Hardship Fund is for people who are facing financial hardship due to the Covid crisis and they could be awarded a one-off grant to help buy essential food and fuel. People are eligible if they have no earnings, receive or have applied for Universal Credit, live in Lewisham, are liable for bills and have less than £6,000 in savings.

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/benefits/get-financial-help-if-you-are-struggling-due-to-covid19>



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## QUARANTINE

Please be aware that the Government have stated that all people entering the UK from certain countries will need to spend a 2 week period of quarantine (self-isolation) in their homes. You can view the list of countries that are exempt (you will NOT need to quarantine from these countries, but you WILL from any country not named on this list) here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>

If a child is required to quarantine, they must NOT attend school. Please find further guidance here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>

## E - SAFETY

Please continue to be aware of what your child is doing online, especially at this time when they may be spending extra time learning and socialising online. Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - support to keep children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - support to keep children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers
- [Kiddle](#) and [KidRex](#) - child friendly search engines

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

If your child is finding it hard to cope with the changes to their lives, or a family member is ill or has died, please let us know. St Mary's school are here to work with you to support our children's emotional needs in any way that we can. Here are some links to places where families can find additional support:

- [Every mind matters](#) - mental health advice from the NHS including a section on looking after children during the coronavirus outbreak
- [Government guidance for parents and carers](#) - supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing
- [How to wash your hands safely](#) - BBC Newsround video
- [Children's Commissioner](#) - a guide for children and links to resources
- [Childhood Bereavement Network](#) - support around dealing with the coronavirus pandemic for all children, specifically those that have experienced the death of someone important to them