



## Covid-19 Update

Dear Parents,

Firstly, let me start by saying I hope you are all well. I understand from speaking to many families that this pandemic is affecting you all differently and some of you have been affected by Covid-19 more than others. You have all been in my thoughts these last 6 weeks. I wanted to give you an update on what action we are taking as a school and what preparations we are making to ensure St. Mark's School continues to move forward during this pandemic.

I understand many of you are wondering when schools will fully re-open and I can assure you, it has been on my mind a lot, but we have no more information than you do, and we are hearing updates from the government at the same time you are and managing new changes and challenges daily in the best possible way we can. I can assure you we are working hard to get school ready and organised for when your child/ren returns. (We sincerely hope this is not too far in the distant future as we are missing all the children dearly!)

Leaders are responding to the daily and weekly demands that Covid-19 presents, mostly ensuring that children and families are safe and well during these challenging times. Please be assured that we will continue to support children's well-being when normal school life resumes, as we understand that every child will have had a unique experience of Covid-19. If you wish to speak to Mrs. Linley regarding any concerns you have in the meantime, please email the school email address: [enquiry@stmarkrc.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@stmarkrc.bham.sch.uk). Leaders are also working on enhancing and developing the school curriculum further and we are planning for a very exciting future ahead for St. Mark's because let's not forget... this will not last forever and we strive to be the best and do the best we can for our children. In doing so, we cannot ignore the fantastic learning opportunities this has provided for many children and families. Twitter has shown some of our parents to be very talented at creating fun and educational games/activities out of ordinary household materials and as a result, children are gaining valuable, lifelong skills that they would not have otherwise got to experience in school. If you haven't already got a twitter account, you can sign up for one free and follow us @StMarksRC. It has been a real pleasure looking at some of the photos parents have tweeted - thank you for keeping us updated!

Teachers have kept in touch with you through Easter cards, making telephone calls home, using BGFL 365 to message and discuss online learning and setting up a new school Twitter account to keep in touch. If you have not received a phone call from a member of staff, please can you call or email the school and let us know that you and the family are well. We understand some families are in isolation with others so we would greatly appreciate an update from you. Staff even got creative and made a film to make all our families smile (and hopefully laugh!). Mrs. Hussain has been incredibly busy

organising and arranging food vouchers for you and despite many issues encountered that were out of her control, she has managed to overcome many obstacles and get the vouchers out to you (thank you for your patience!).

Over the last few weeks, teachers have been busy writing reports for children. As we were not able to have our parent consultation evenings as planned before Easter, staff have written every child a report, so despite this year's pandemic halting much of school life, your child will still receive a report to inform you of their learning and progress until March 2020. These reports will be posted out to you over the coming weeks and you will receive a text message informing you when your child's report has been posted. If you would like your child's report to be emailed to you, please email the school email address on: [enquiry@stmarkrc.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@stmarkrc.bham.sch.uk) We anticipate that your child will have some gaps in their learning due to Covid-19 and this cannot be overlooked. Please do not worry – this is something we have already started planning for, more information will be given out to you on how we plan to manage this in due course.

Finally, it is clear that it takes much more than a text book to instil the values of a good global citizen. Children need to put these values into practice through activities that involve teamwork, co-operation and dialogue, promoting *giving* instead of just receiving. I have never seen so much giving in the last 6 weeks and many of you probably do not realise what an important lesson you are teaching your children by giving to others. I have been overwhelmed by the support we have received from you. Thank you to those of you who donated your FSM vouchers to other families in need, the thank you cards sent into school, the twitter comments that have made us smile, the offer of your services to support school and keep it running for the key workers and for those of you who have sent in treats for children and staff. A teacher cannot teach your child how to respond to a pandemic, you are teaching your child important life skills at the moment, and even though each day might not go as you had planned and may feel somewhat challenging and stressful – you are doing a great job!

Here is one of my favourite prayers for protection, I hope it brings you some comfort during this time.

### **The Deer's Cry**

I arise today through the strength of heaven  
Light of sun, radiance of moon  
Splendour of fire, speed of lightning  
Swiftness of wind, depth of the sea  
Stability of earth, firmness of rock

I arise today through God's strength to pilot me  
God's eye to look before me  
God's wisdom to guide me  
God's way to lie before me  
God's shield to protect me

From all who shall wish me ill  
Afar and a-near  
Alone and in a multitude  
Against every cruel, merciless power  
That may oppose my body and soul

Christ with me, Christ before me  
Christ behind me, Christ in me  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left

Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down  
Christ when I arise, Christ to shield me

Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me

I arise today.

Amen

Please take good care of yourselves and if you need support of ANY kind – please get in touch with the school and we will do our best to help you. Take care and God Bless.

Mrs. Linley and the St. Mark's Team



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### **Important Message to Parents:**

**If YOU or ANYONE you know is experiencing domestic violence – please report it.**

**The following websites can offer support:**

[www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

You can speak to a member of the National Domestic Abuse Helpline team at any time, day or night for free on **0808 2000 247**. The Helpline adviser will offer confidential, non-judgmental information and expert support. Please do not suffer alone!

