

Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School

Care – learn – Respect

Dear parents, carers and families of Our Lady's.
Please see below some practical changes that we are asking you to support.

Wet weather

When I moved north from Devon the staff warned me of the many wet days of autumn and winter in this part of the world. I have to say that last year the weather was not so bad but this year the rain has brought many interruptions to school breaks.

When it rains first thing in the morning before school it is sometimes too much to put up with: it is important that the children are able to come into school quickly. We also notice that some parents have younger ones and by the time they've walked around to drop off and then back again to the school gates little ones can already be wet through. Not great if they are off to pre-school.



At this time staff are not always in the classrooms so we can't make a reliable plan to open the class doors early. Staff can be in meetings, photocopying and dealing with other preparations for the day. So if it is very wet all children can enter by the same door from the key stage 1 playground and our youngest children in reception, year one and two will wait in the hall and be taken to class for 8.45.

Obviously if you prefer to walk around to key stage 1 and wait for the doors to be opened that is not a problem. Equally parents of older children are also welcome to wait with their child for normal drop off.

If you have any questions about this, please speak to Mrs Mannix directly.

Parking

We appreciate that with this wet weather it can be tempting to double park. Please think of the safety of all when you park. You might know you are only going to be a few minutes but the yellow lines around the school are there for an important reason which is to keep all safe and save lives.

Thornhill Close is a narrow road. Within the cul de sac home owners report that they sometimes can't get out because our families are blocking the way.

Many of our families worry, particularly as they are leaving school with their children and lots of children and adults are by the gates that careless parking can block the view and safety is a concern

We are very fortunate to have a very reliable and dedicated lollipop person. People parking to drop off older children can bring danger to those crossing and to our crossing control adult.

Of course we all appreciate that these times are busy and that no school has been built with a consideration of so many children being driven to school each day but please do choose a parking spot that is safe, legal and respects our neighbours. Thank you in advance from all of our little people for your consideration.



Giving at Our Lady's.

We received a very grateful letter from The Blackpool Food Bank following our Harvest Collection. They identified that our donating would contribute to 500 food parcels.

A huge thank you for your support.

Thank you also for organising home clothes and donations for Children in Need.

This year we have shared more with some of our children about the way it provides funds to organisations here in the UK to help children and families.

In school we often talk about what children need v what they want. Our children understand that all children need life's basics: water, food, a safe shelter and of course people to care for them. During our Remembrance work we have also talked about being able to live without war. Children do understand that there are children in the world who don't have these basics and we encourage our children to not take these for granted.

As Children in Need is a UK based charity it's long term focus has been to work with charities across the UK to allow children who face difficulties to flourish. It does support the growing challenges of food insecurity. This year, without going into too much detail we have encouraged our children to know that some of these children who receive support do so because they have felt left out and can be made to feel different because of their differences and that as well as supporting the charity practically we are working in our school to ensure that children are kind in their thoughts and their actions.

The Diary of a Wimpy Kid.

On Thursday we were extremely fortunate to have Jeff Kinney in school.

We were the last school on his UK tour and from here he is off to Germany and China before returning home for Christmas.

Despite a busy schedule when he talked to our children he was thoughtful and enthusiastic. His love of books and his desire to encourage that in our young people oozed from him.

We had a lovely afternoon which we are sure some of our children will never forget.

During the afternoon Miss Heim-Sarac, with the help of the whole school, took part in a quiz to win prizes for our school library winning over £1,000. This will really help with our plans to improve the library space and the books we can make available to the children.

We were very grateful to all that made this gift possible for our children.

Year Five GIFT Team

We encourage all of our children to grow their talents for themselves and for the benefit of others. The Growing in Faith Team is an opportunity to further develop our giving. This has been open to year five pupils. The year five pupils have volunteered for the role and taken part in training.

In school we are always drawing children's attention to positive role models and to examples of good work. This has always been important work but now with the impact of modern influencers via the internet - some who have negative motivations - our children need to be directed to true role models.

As a staff team we encourage the children to notice positive leadership and role models from within their class groups and across the school. Our Friday assemblies we really highlight the qualities of trust worthy and reliable role models.

The GIFT Team are working to create more opportunities for giving.

In advance of our last whole school mass they created positive messages which they passed on to parishioners. They also created messages to support Lilly before her grans funeral, they made heart messages to share with Lilly and her family and painted large butterflies which were on view on the day of Mrs Cheston's funeral.

Small acts of kindness to bring more light into our school.

Next some of them will work with Father Frank on an active prayer journey.

Year five are keen volunteers. Some have proposed bake sales as a fund raising idea. I've spoken to staff and to some parents as this has not been a school tradition at anytime. After Covid some people were naturally wary of home baked items and with the rise in allergies some parents have to be more careful but that aside bake sales are great community events and help children to be involved actively. So we propose next term to start these. Year five will take the lead. This will likely be a before the end of school/ straight after school event so you as parents can select appropriate items for your child. We will share the details with you in advance.

Thank you for your continued support of our wider school work. It all is important in working to develop our children into young people who are positive, solution focussed, kind and thoughtful, who choose to focus on growing their gifts and talents to make the world a better place for themselves and others.

Support for families.

With the continued cost of living demands as we approach Christmas please note that there are sources of support for families across the area.

If you know of anyone who is facing challenge do encourage them to take action and support them to seek advice.

It does take a community to bring up a child and at times we all need support in small and sometimes bigger ways.

Blackpool Council offers a range of support services.

The Blackpool Football Club Winter Families Hubs are back. Families can access games and activities plus a free hot meal each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 3.30 to 5.30.

See the link below to share and book.

<file:///E:/Our%20Ladys%202023%20to%2024/Parent%20communications/Winter%20Hubs%20Oct%202023.pdf>

Thank you to all of our parent role models

We are constantly working to improve what we do and are very open to listening to parents and carers. You often have a different take on aspects of school life and you hear much from the viewpoint of your child. We are always open to hearing what you have to say. There should never be a need to raise a voice or to be accusing. Adults who choose to approach us in this way will not be acceptable.

If you have any concerns about any aspect of school life of course we want to know. We are very open to ideas, suggestions and we do recognise that we can always do better. If you would like to feedback there are lots of ways that are acceptable and appropriate. Thank you in advance for your continued cooperation, encouragement and support.

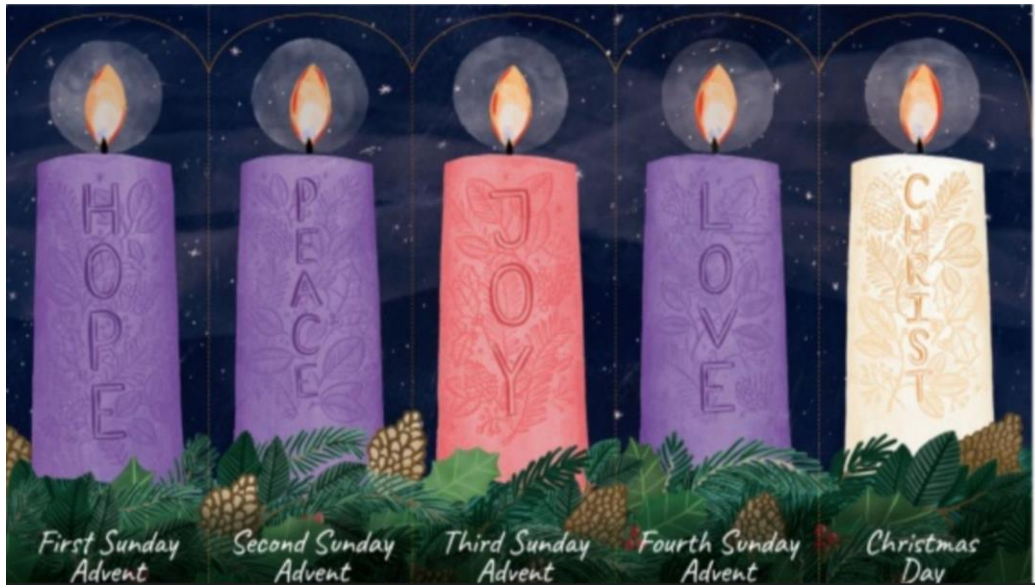
The Children's Commissioner would like to hear from you and your children.

The Big Ambition is a national survey and all children and families are asked to take part. The findings of this survey will be shared with senior decision makers in government. Please consider completing this short survey and encouraging your child to complete it too.

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigambition>

Advent.

Advent is a time of waiting. It is dedicated to creating calm and joyous reflective anticipation of the miracle of Christmas. The four themes are hope, peace joy and love.



Most of us know that it competes wildly with the preparations for Christmas. If you are feeling the pressure to have matching pyjamas and turn your home into a sparkling wonderland maybe stop and remember what has stuck with you from any childhood positive memories. Making space for this season will be a true gift.

We are not trying to add to the pressures of the days to Christmas. Advent is a beautiful season when we make the time take a moment each day to stop. There are some ideas below for you to consider.

This year Advent will start on Sunday 3rd December and runs to 24th December.

Here are some ideas

Make your own family Advent calendar alternative:

Spend a few hours making messages for the 24 days before Christmas. These might be things that you are all grateful for: people and the reasons we care, favourites activities, special foods, places you've been to Put them all in a jar or box and take one out each day and spend five minutes being glad.

Alternatively plot the 24 days to Christmas with little messages. Include messages of thanks, little treats (a hot chocolate stop, a favourite snack, a shared story that is or could become a favourite) maybe a giving action. Perhaps you know a neighbour or someone locally who doesn't get a lot of visitors- take them a home made card.

Consider making a Jesse tree

A Jesse tree is a tree set up during Advent. The term comes from Isaiah 11:1, where the birth of Jesus is prophesied. Each day, you put a symbolic ornament onto the tree and read the related Scripture passage. All of the readings tell the story of Jesus and his heritage, starting from Adam and Eve and finishing at his birth.

Here is

a link to the Jesse tree symbols

https://www.simplycatholic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Jesse_Tree.pdf

Alternatively sign up for Cafod's daily Advent reflection.

<https://cafod.org.uk/pray/advent-calendar>

Attendance Matters

With so many interruptions to school learning over recent years everyone is working to get back to support attendance. Families will appreciate that missing days will have an impact on children's learning.

In 2022 to 23 families were taking in year holiday in part to catch up on holidays booked through Covid. From Jan 2024, in line with national and Blackpool protocols going forwards unauthorised holiday absence will be subject to fining.

We thank you in advance for your support and understanding with this.

If you have any questions, worries or concerns that you know are impacting on your child's ability to attend school then please speak directly to your child's class teacher or Mrs Ormerod or Mrs Mannix.

95%	=	47 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 9.5 days or 1 week & 4.5 days of learning missed
90%	=	95 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 19 days or 3 weeks & 4 days of learning missed
85%	=	143 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 28.5 days or 5 weeks & 3.5 days of learning missed
80%	=	190 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 38 days or 7 weeks & 3 days of learning missed
75%	=	237.5 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 47.5 days or 9 weeks & 2.5 days of learning missed

**EVERY
DAY
MATTERS!**

**WHAT DO YOUR
ATTENDANCE
FIGURES ACTUALLY
MEAN?**

PERCENTAGES BASED ON 190
ACADEMIC DAYS