



St. Mary's C of E (VC) Primary School

Devon County Council. Children and Young People's Services

Headteacher: **Adrian Scarrett BEd (Hons)**

Chanters Road

Bideford

Devon EX39 2QN

Telephone: 01237 477288

e-mail: admin@stmarysce.co.uk

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Dear Parents,

It is good to be back after the break and to see that the sun is shining even though the weather is still cold. There is lots to do in the short term before Easter and lots to celebrate.

Burton Art Gallery Schools' Exhibition

There is still a week or so to go and see the exhibition at the Burton Art Gallery. Many of our children have already been or will be going to see the work that we have submitted and the work from other local schools. It is a fantastic celebration of the art work that is going on with young people in the Bideford area and well worth a visit. At the celebration and awards evening on Tuesday 20th St Mary's were awarded a prize for 'Outstanding' art work. I am very proud of our children and staff and the work that they put into giving our children a broad and balanced educational experience. Art is a small but significant part of this! The award comes with a £100 prize which will be put towards a whole school art experience later in the academic year.



World Book Day

Thursday 1st March is World Book Day. We are inviting the children to wear costumes related to books which they like. These do not have to be bought, or overly elaborate, it is just a way of celebrating our love of reading. On the day itself we are asking children to **bring in books** that they may have finished with so that **they can swap them** for a different book. We are also running our **Extreme Reading** celebration again, so if you could take photos of your children reading books in weird and wonderful (but safe!) situations and send in a copy (this can be done by email if you prefer) then we will add them to our display.

A partner school in the



Off-site visits

During the first part of the Spring term we had lots of visits that gave children first hand experiences both in school and off-site. The experiences that we have been able to offer this term are:

- Beauty and the Beast – Pantomime, in school
- Visits to Rosemoor Education Centre
- Swimming for Year 4 at Torridge Pool
- Foundation Stage and Year 1/2 Visits through the Atlantic Coast Co-operative Trust (ACCT) to the Art studio at Appledore School
- Year 4, 5 and 6 to the Atlantic Racquet Centre to use the new indoor courts
- Year 5 visited We are the Curious (formerly @Bristol)
- We also had our Cultures Day in school

Still to come this term:

- Children from across the school to attend a variety of Gifted and Talented Workshops, through the Socrates Project organised by the ACCT.
- World Book Day Celebrations for the whole school (March 1st)
- The Key Stage Two Choir will be taking part in the Bideford Area Music Festival at Woolsery Village Hall, followed by a concert at the Devon Hall, Bideford College.
- During Science Week (12th March) we have Exmoor Zoo visiting to run workshops with every child.
- Jays will be taking part in the Bideford Area Key Stage One Singing Festival, singing with 200 other children from across the area.
- Members of our community from St Mary's church will be visiting to deliver an Easter Experience in the last week of term.
- Year 3 are going for a walk along the River Torridge

As you can see we are trying to continue to provide exciting and different opportunities for all of our children.

Online safety workshops

In my letter prior to the break I requested a show of interest in Online Safety workshops for parents. At the moment I have not had a big enough response that would enable us to run such an event. If you think that you would be interested in this then please contact the school office to register that interest. However, if you look below Great Torrington School are running a workshop on Online Safety on the 5th March. If you would like to attend this (or any of the other parent talks on their list) then please contact our school office.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding of children is of paramount importance to us. Below is a letter which outlines our procedure for a whole school lockdown (should this ever be required). Whilst this is not something that we would anticipate ever having to do it is importance that the children (and you) are aware of our procedure for this.

Thank you for your continued support

Adrian Scarrett

Dear parent,

Re: Enhancing safety in our school

At St Mary's we take safeguarding and safety very seriously. It is important that we continue to review all our procedures, taking into account even those events that are very unlikely to occur. As part of this process, we have had to introduce a new procedure called "lockdown".

I am writing to inform you that we will be practising this procedure during next week.

What is a lockdown and when would we carry it out?

A lockdown procedure is a standard health and safety procedure, similar to a fire drill.

Our lockdown procedure would be used when there is a threat to the safety of pupils, staff and others in the school, and when it is safer for everyone to remain in school than evacuate. The aim is to keep people safe by confining them to a secure place of safety.

Situations where our lockdown procedure may be used include:

- A potentially dangerous person or animal on the school site
- A disturbance or dangerous situation in the local community that could affect the school
- A nearby chemical incident or other risk of air pollution
- An incident related to terrorism

Our procedure

Our lockdown procedure is as follows:

- The school fire bell will ring with an intermittent tone
- Teachers will take their children inside and lock all external doors and close windows; if appropriate blinds will be drawn.
- Registers will then be taken to ensure that all children are accounted for – if children are in a different part of the school then the internal telephone system will be used to communicate the whereabouts of children not with their whole class
- The head teacher or his representative will call the emergency services
- The school will remain in lockdown until advised that it is safe to continue as normal.

Instructions for parents in the event of a lockdown

Explain:

- If the school ever had to undertake a lockdown parents will be informed by text message when it is possible to do so
- In the event of such an incident we would ask that parents do not attempt to call or come to the school, as this may hinder the school's effort to contact and work with the emergency services
- We would also recommend that parents do not discuss the event on social media, as this may spread false information and create panic
- If an incident occurs and will mean that the lockdown was to continue beyond the end of the school day then you would be informed by text message

Prior to our drill, staff will take time to talk to pupils about lockdown procedures and explain why they are important. They will reassure pupils after the drill that they are safe, and will emphasise that practising procedures like this will make sure the school remains a safe place to learn.

I must stress again this is simply a practice, so that in the highly unlikely event of such a situation, our pupils and staff are fully prepared.

If you or your child have any further concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Scarrett
Headteacher

