



Mary Dean's CE Primary School

Newsletter

Thursday 28th May 2020



Dear Parents and Carers,

Well, we are now 10 weeks into the lockdown and there are signs that some things can start to return to the new normal.

Before I continue, I would like to thank every one of the staff who are associated with our school for their hard work and continued commitment throughout incredibly difficult times.

According to some press and social media, school staff have spent the last 10 weeks 'sat at home'. This is so offensive. I find it hard to find the words to describe my feelings of anger and affront at this inaccurate and, frankly, ignorant portrayal of loyal, dedicated Primary school staff who have had all the same challenges to face as every other parent or family member whilst they come to grips with working from their homes **and** being at school with groups of children. I know work has been set for children and commented on, Zoom meetings encouraged and engaged in, resources sent or hand delivered to anyone who has requested help and frequent email, dojo and telephone contact made with families.

We fully appreciate it's not perfect and it's not the same as being in school – we entirely agree! But please respect the amount of effort that has gone into all of this from all the staff.

So, now we prepare for the arrival of extended numbers of children in school.

At the time of writing, (28th May) we have a full set of plans ready to be rolled out on Monday. A full risk assessment has been carried out and agreed by the Local Authority. Governors have also visited school and reported their satisfaction on the plans we have in place.

In accordance with current government advice, we can accommodate a maximum of 11 children in a

classroom. You are all aware that our rooms are small and 11 allows us an appropriate amount of space for each pupil to maintain distance from each other. Clearly, this is only about a third of the usual number we would have in a room and will have an impact on the total number of places we can offer.

All parents who have requested places in Year 6 and Reception prior to the deadline have been contacted with details of when their child should attend.

Our Key Worker groups make up the largest number of children in school and they have continued to access school daily since March.

We can offer a total of 66 key worker child places and 65 of those are now taken. I am in conversation with the Local Authority about what can be done to support further families as they request additional places.

I appreciate it is frustrating, but we are required to follow government advice and all its changes within the constraints of our building.

All key workers who have a place have been contacted. If you are awaiting confirmation, please bear with us as we take additional advice.

You will all be aware that advice to schools has changed on a (more than) daily basis and it is a challenge to keep everyone up to date with the most current information.

Our school website holds the most comprehensive and up to date range of information and I would recommend you check in there for anything you may have missed or have a question about. The newsletters page can be found at <https://www.marydeansprimaryschool.co.uk/newsletters>



Change to term dates

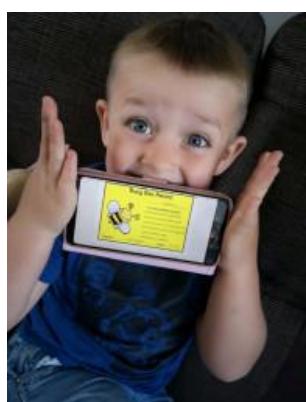
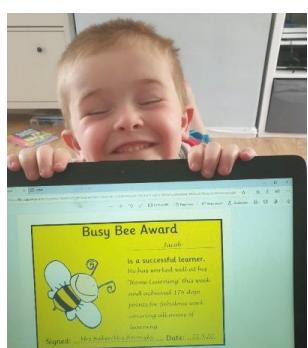
As you will all know, we had originally planned to have the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of June as additional half term days.

However, with all the changes that have happened over the last 10 weeks, the decision has been made to re-start school in line with others in Plymouth on 1st June.

As a result, the last day of the school term when school closes for the summer holiday will now be **Friday 17th July**.

Reception Busy Bee Awards

Mrs Baker and Mrs Lennox must think I have forgotten them...



Well done everyone – looks like you're doing a great job!

Coming back to school

Any child coming back to school will be expected to follow the social distancing and hygiene measures school has put in place. We are fully appreciative that some of our youngest children may find this hard, but those we have worked with have been superbly receptive and we will support everyone to understand.

Should any child – especially one above Year 3 – be unwilling to comply with social distancing and behave in a way that we consider to be a potential risk to others' health and well-being, we reserve the right to refuse their place in school at this time. Please make sure your child, especially those who have not been in school since March, is fully aware of this expectation before they come to school.

The letter sent out on 20th May sets out our expectations clearly if you are in any doubt and can be found on your email or on the newsletters page of the school website.

Thank you.

I am sure there are many of you waiting for information about when your child can return to school. We are also looking forward to having everyone back together.

Until then, keep up the sterling work you are doing at home – despite all its ups and downs, you are doing a superb job. We will continue to do our best to support home learning, but please ask if you need any additional ideas or suggestions. There is a link below from Mr Cozens for you to try out.

<https://www.booksfortopics.com/post/blog-five-ways-to-give-children-access-to-stories-and-reading-during-lockdown>

Most importantly. Stay safe and be kind to each other.

Thank you for your ongoing help and support for our school.

Mrs J Jones

Head Teacher