

Dear Parents and Carers,

## Message from Mrs Dowdeswell



I hope you all had a wonderful summer and it has been a delight to welcome the children back after the summer break. I offer an especially warm welcome to our families and children who have joined us in Ash and Oak class; we are so happy to have you join our school and look forward to providing the very best education for you. It has been great to see all of the children settle back so well and it is always an exciting time as we embark on a new year of learning. I would like to say a huge thank you to the staff who worked so hard during the summer, preparing classrooms and planning exciting learning opportunities for the year ahead and I know I speak on behalf of them all when I say how much we looked forward to welcoming the children back.

## Christmas Fayre (I know, I know – sorry the ‘C’ word is out there!)

We are beginning to think about our Christmas Fayre and I would like to ask you to save any items which you feel might be useful for us to sell at the Christmas Fayre. I know many families start to sort out existing toys and books ready for the new ones that Santa will bring and I would be so grateful if you could put these to one side for us. I also know that for many families this year is going to be a difficult one; if you feel you are unlikely to be able to buy your child(ren) a present this Christmas, please come and speak to me and I will do all I can to help. Please don't feel embarrassed or awkward – we all need a helping hand sometimes and I am more than happy to do what I can. You can either call in person or email [admin@holycross.swindon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@holycross.swindon.sch.uk) and mark FAO Mrs Dowdeswell.



A huge thank you to Year 6 who prepared Mass for the school on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September and to Father Lucas who kindly came to school to celebrate the Mass with us. I also thank the children and families who attended the procession on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September organised by Holy Rood Church. It was an amazing turnout and we were very proud that our school and pupils were invited to take part.

## Harvest

Our Harvest Mass will be led by the children in Year 5 at Holy Rood Church on **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October at 5:30pm**. This is an important celebration for the school that supports our learning in RE and British Values and all children are expected to attend. We have chosen the Swindon Food Collective as our Harvest charity again as they work tirelessly to help the families of Swindon. Here is a link should you wish to find out more about the very worthwhile work they do



<https://www.swindonfoodcollective.org/>. A separate letter will follow giving all the details needed including times and donation requests. All children are to wear full uniform please and the Friday before will be a non-uniform day so that families are able to have the uniform washed and ready for the Sunday.

### Parents' Evenings



Parents' Evenings will take place on **Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> and Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October** for children in **Y1 – Y6**; however, there are a couple of classes where it has been necessary to have different dates to accommodate teacher's working days. Parents' Evenings are an important opportunity for you to see how your child has settled into their new class; talk to their new teacher; and find out how you can support your child at home. Time slots are now open via ParentPay and we look forward to seeing you.

### Attendance

You will no doubt have seen details on the news about the changes to attendance. A separate letter has been sent to all parents and we strongly recommend you read this carefully as the Department for Education has introduced several changes to attendance, lateness and fines. It is really important your child is in school ready for the first lesson of the day to start at 8:45am so that they do not miss valuable learning. If you catch a bus to school, please ensure you catch a bus that enables your child to arrive on time.

### Attendance Matters



### Swimming — Year 4

We are pleased to be able offer swimming lessons to our Year 4 classes, these started Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September. Please ensure your child brings a swimming costume or trunks, a towel and a swimming hat for girls with long hair. Also, it is easier for girls to wear socks rather than tights on the days they swim as it is quicker when changing. Payment for swimming is made via ParentPay and children should participate in every lesson. A note from parents will be needed if a child is unable to swim on a particular week.

### Reading



At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, we recognise the importance of developing skilled readers who have a real love for reading. Sharing a book with your child is such a precious gift of parenthood and one that is only with us for a relatively short while. Please do remember to read with your child every day if possible and as an absolute minimum, 3 times per week. There is lots of support on our school website to help you support your child with their reading and I know that together we can help your children become great readers!



### Clubs

Clubs will be starting shortly and a separate letter shall come out telling you what clubs are available for your children to join. Many of our clubs are run by our staff on a voluntary basis and I once again thank them for all they do for the children of the school. 🖍️ 📖 🏠 ⚽️ 🌸

## Website

<https://www.holycross.swindon.sch.uk/>

Please remember to regularly visit our website as all important information about the school is on there. We also have individual class pages so that you can see what your child has been doing in school and there is important information about your child's learning so that you can support them at home: I promise you, you can have great fun learning together! 😊

## Parking

I am delighted to see so many of our parents support the school and the safety of our families by parking at the County Ground and walking the very short distance to school. On behalf of all of our pupils, I thank these parents so much: you are not only helping to keep our children safe, but you are also setting an excellent example to the pupils. Sadly, however, we have seen an increase in the number of people who are trying to park on-site and I remind you once again that we have no on-site parking facilities unless by prior agreement with the headteacher (this is for blue badge holders etc). Please remember that we have children as young as **four years old** attending our school, as well as children with **higher level needs** and I know that you will all agree that the safety of our children is paramount.



I am delighted to advise that our school has been selected by 'School Street'. This a project run by Swindon Borough Council to restrict traffic outside schools at certain times of the day to create a safer environment for walking and cycling to school. They have already repainted the yellow lines outside the school and will also ensure an increased presence of police and traffic enforcement officers. I thank you for your support in keeping all our children safe.

## Young Minds Mellow Yellow 11<sup>th</sup> October

On 11th October, our school will celebrate **World Mental Health Day** in a very bright way! We are taking part in the **Hello Yellow** campaign with the charity **Young Minds**, which supports children's mental health. To help us turn the school into a sea of sunshine, children are encouraged to wear something yellow on this day. In the afternoon, they'll take part in fun activities focused on supporting their mental well-being. We're also asking for a **£1 donation** to help raise funds for this important cause. Together, we can brighten up the school and make a big difference for the mental well-being of future generations!

## Volunteers

If you are interested in volunteering at the school, please do speak to Mrs Fernandes in the office, or email [admin@holycross.swindon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@holycross.swindon.sch.uk). We are so grateful to our existing volunteers who come into school to listen to children read, help with DT, accompany the children swimming; walking the children to church, and so much more. This can be extremely rewarding for you and also helps the children of our school in so many ways. We would be very happy to hear from you if you feel you would be able to give a few hours to help our school community. Thank you so much.

BECOME A VOLUNTEER - MAKE A DIFFERENCE



## Lunches

We have an excellent new catering manager who cooks delicious and nutritious school meals. We strongly recommend that children have a hot meal during the colder months and we are finding that children with packed lunches are increasingly saying they want a school meal when they see the delicious meal the others are eating. If you wish to book your child a hot meal, please do this through ParentPay.



### Cultural Capital

#### Definition of cultural capital:

- The values, knowledge or ideas that parents can pass on to their children, which can then influence their success at school and later in life.

In school, we work so hard to give the children as many first-hand experiences as we can; however, we would love for the children to experience more. In every newsletter we shall provide some examples of where you could take your children. Here are the first few ideas:



#### Coate Water Country Park

Coate Water is a wonderful place to visit and I wonder if as a family you could spot the following: a heron, a cormorant, a young swan, a squirrel and a robin. You could make up an 'eye spy' list to see how many they can cross off. The conkers are out now and children always have great fun finding these and running through the leaves as they look for them. Could they use the internet or

a book to find out what a conker is and why the leaves fall from the trees?

[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20077/parks\\_and\\_open\\_spaces/487/coate\\_water\\_park](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20077/parks_and_open_spaces/487/coate_water_park)

#### Oh, I do like to be beside the seaside...

Who doesn't enjoy a visit to the seaside?! The closest beaches to Swindon are Weston-Super-Mare and Bournemouth – autumn is a lovely time to visit a beach, so why don't you see if you could do a day trip during the October half term? You could talk to your child about the wildlife, rockpools etc and perhaps they could prepare a picture or a fact file on beaches. For older children, maybe they could write a comparison between Swindon and a coastal town. 💡



#### Town Gardens

We are very lucky to have such wonderful parks in Swindon and Town Gardens in Old Town is simply beautiful. There is a play park suitable for all ages, tennis courts, a café, and a bandstand where there are often bands playing on a Sunday afternoon. There is a large pond and also a fantastic bird aviary. It is definitely worth a visit. Your child could look up some of the different species of bird, go squirrel hunting, or collect leaves, pine cones, and acorns to make an autumn collage. 🍁 🌿 🌱

<https://towntngardens-swindon.co.uk/>



## October - Black History Month

4<sup>th</sup> October: School photos

9<sup>th</sup> October Nasal flu vaccination

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> October: Parents' Evenings

11<sup>th</sup> October: Non-uniform day – we will be wearing yellow and making a donation of £1

13<sup>th</sup> October: Harvest Festival at Holy Rood Church at 5pm – all families requested to attend.

24<sup>th</sup> October Half Term



## November

4<sup>th</sup> November School re opens

11<sup>th</sup> November: Anti-bullying Week

13<sup>th</sup> November: School disco (remember to buy your child's ticket before the deadline!) Details to follow.

15<sup>th</sup> November: Odd socks day

29<sup>th</sup> November: TD Day – school is closed to all pupils

## December

4<sup>th</sup> December: Nativity performance at Holy Rood Church – parents invited. Times to follow.

6<sup>th</sup> December: Advent Service for pupils

11<sup>th</sup> December: Pantomimes at the Wyvern.

20<sup>th</sup> December: Christmas Mass for pupils

20<sup>th</sup> December: Last day of term. All pupils to be collected at 1:30pm.

## January

6<sup>th</sup> January TDD school is closed to all pupils

7<sup>th</sup> January TDD school is closed to all pupils

8<sup>th</sup> January School re opens

10<sup>th</sup> January Epiphany Mass for pupils.



The prayer room at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Lord Jesus,

We ask for Your help as we begin this new school year.

Allow us to experience Your presence in the many blessings You put before us. Open our eyes to the new challenges and exciting opportunities that this new school year brings.

Open our hearts and minds to new friends and new teachers.

Amen.

*Learn, Grow, Love, Live*