

03 October 2016

Dear Parents & Carers

Now that the dust of the start of term has settled I'd like to take this opportunity to say how positive the start of term has been. Your children have returned keen and ready to learn. They have adapted quickly to the new school day and many of them have been keen to sign up to the lunchtime clubs. Attendance and punctuality are good and they are looking very smart in their new school ties!

The theme of my opening assemblies was 'New Opportunities' and I talked about the importance of students taking all the human and God given opportunities they have to help them be the best they can be. I understand how difficult things can be from day to day but I really do believe that education matters: it opens doors and provides wonderful future options. Just look at our smashing A Level results and the range of pathways they have opened up for our students: university, employment, apprenticeships.

I also outlined a quote from Mo Farah that struck me when he was interviewed just after completing that historic 'double-double' at the Olympics:

- "If you dream something, have ambition and are willing to work hard you can achieve your dreams."

Nothing is handed to you in this life which means dreams and ambition alone are not enough; if you really want something you do have to work hard. In that spirit I have offered your children four things for their 'To Do' lists this year:

- Aim high: to challenge themselves and understand that it is alright to make mistakes as these are the way we learn.
- Be the best you can be: my mantra since I joined in January and something every individual can aim for.
- Leave the baggage at the door: to come to school and come to lessons without the weight of squabbles and fall outs and to focus on being ready to learn.
- 25 good hours: to commit to a minimum of 25 good hours of learning a week in the academy (that's giving their best in every lesson in the week).

I know you, like everyone here at All Saints, wants the very best for your children and I know you will support us in helping them become the very best they can be.

God bless



Gary Fitcher  
Headteacher  
All Saints C of E Academy Plymouth

PS: On the reverse of this letter you will find one from Public Health England regarding measles that I would like to share with you.

## Message for parents

You may be aware that measles is circulating in many areas across the country; there continues to be cases in many parts of the South West. Transmission is occurring most in areas with a lower uptake of MMR vaccine; in particular parts of Devon, Somerset and Dorset. The majority of cases are of secondary school age but people of all ages are being affected. Following an outbreak in South Devon in the summer we continue to see the majority of our cases in Devon.

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness spread through coughing and sneezing and close personal contact. Most people feel very unwell but do recover completely from measles, however, on rare occasions there can be serious complications.

The first stage of measles includes a runny nose, conjunctivitis (red eyes), a cough and an increasing fever that comes and goes. A rash appears on day 3 or 4 while the individual is still feverish and miserable.

Anyone with suspected measles should be excluded from school or work until five days after the rash first appears.

MMR vaccine offers a high level of protection against measles. The first dose should be given at 12 months of age and the second with the pre-school booster, but if these have been missed it is never too late to have them. Two doses are required to provide a high level of protection. This is important for the protection of the individual and also to protect those who cannot be immunised because of age, pregnancy or an underlying medical condition causing immunosuppression. For these vulnerable people, measles can be a particularly serious disease.

If you are unsure whether your child/children have been fully immunised, you can check with your GP surgery and make an appointment to receive any doses of MMR vaccine they may have missed to ensure they have the 2 doses to provide protection against measles and also rubella and mumps.

MMR is also beneficial if given within 72 hours of exposure to the virus.

If your children do have signs or symptoms of measles, please contact your GP to seek medical advice. Please telephone the GP surgery before visiting and tell the receptionist that the person may have measles so that the surgery can ensure that arrangements are made to avoid exposing other patients to a potential infection.

Further information is available from NHS Choices:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Information about the MMR vaccine can be found by visiting

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pages/mmr-vaccine.aspx>