

**“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.
My heart leaps for JOY, and with my song I praise him.”**

Dear Parents and Carers

We've decided that 'joy' is the word of the week as we have welcomed back to school Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Many of the staff would say that this week has been a highlight of their career – seeing happy, smiling children bouncing and skipping into class. The circumstances are 'odd' with constant handwashing and social distancing, but hearts are happy!



A huge thank you for all the positive messages we have had from parents both by email and in person and on the gate – they are always a massive encouragement to us all.

We appreciate that many may not feel filled with joy at the moment. You may be desperate for your children to return to school as well as concerns around finances, employment, housing, health and more. Do hang on in there, let us know it is tough and know that we are thinking and praying for you.

King David, the psalmist wrote (and sang!), **“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for JOY, and with my song I praise him.”** David had a lot of challenge in his life from facing the Big Unfriendly Giant Goliath to 'isolation' in a cave when pursued by his enemies. But, he turned to God, trusted him and did the worst 'Dad Dance' in the history of mankind! He may have known dark valleys (he wrote the original 'The Lord is my Shepherd') but also had a heart full of JOY. [Psalm 28 - click here](#) We will look at the story of David as part of our Superhero Awesome Assemblies – coming soon!

The most important thing is the safety and happiness of children as they come back to school and we are thrilled with how smoothly this has gone. It is also encouraging that a large majority of children who are entitled to come back have done so. Today we have in school nearly 200 children:

Reception	50 children
Year 1	45 children
Year 6	50 children
Rainbow Classes	39 children

We expect numbers in R, Y1 and Y6 to gradually increase from Monday alongside welcoming back our Little Fishes children from Tuesday. Parents do not need to let us know if their child is coming back to school in these year groups. Please note that for Rainbow Classes, Octopus Club and Starfish Club, parents MUST pre-book children in as we are nearing capacity on some days and may have to reallocate places for critical workers.

Every blessing

Mr Etherton, Mr Lincoln and team

I. COMMUNICATION

- **Keep in touch:** whether your child is now in school or at home, please do keep in touch and share significant highs and lows that you and your family may be facing. We may be able to help or point you in the direction of help. Email office@stnm.org.uk
- **Emails:** please use the office@stnm.org.uk to contact the school with any queries. Email remains our main form of communication and we continue to receive a huge amount – we will endeavour to respond as soon as possible.
- **Phone:** the school phone line is now open between 8.30am and 3.30pm.
- **Letters sent home this week:** Click on the link to see past letters <http://www.stnicolasmary.w-sussex.sch.uk/page/?title=Letters+Sent+Home&pid=56>
 - We have sent regular updates this week which are all available on the website under Parent & Carers > News & Events > Letters Sent home
 - **Risk Assessment:** Apologies for the delay because of technical issues, but our Risk Assessment, based on WSCC model is now available on our website under Returning After Closure > Risk Assessments for re-opening.

2. ReOPENing Update

- **Scooters and bikes:** Slight change of plan – please could children in Reception / Nursery leave scooters/bikes in the bike shed.
- **Nursery:** please look out for separate ‘update’ with the latest reopening information. Many thanks.

3. WORSHIP & ETHOS:

- **Assemblies:** Children in school will be given the opportunity to watch our Awesome Assemblies. If your child is still at home, do give them the chance to watch Mr Badger’s recent adventures! Next week, our Year 6 bubbles will be taking it in turns to produce their very own Awesome Assemblies!

4. RAINBOW CLASSES – childcare for Critical Worker and Vulnerable children:

bookings must be made by emailing office@stnm.org.uk with the days you require. No bookings can be made via sQuid for the remainder of this term. Please note that the school reserves the right to cancel bookings if we need to re-prioritise for critical workers as we have a limited capacity that we cannot exceed.

5. OCTOPUS CLUB, STARFISH CLUB, LITTLE OCTOPUS CLUB & LITTLE STARFISH CLUB for Critical worker & Vulnerable children only:

these clubs are only available for Critical worker and Vulnerable children until further notice as we cannot provide this service for multiple ‘bubbles’ (groups of children) and maintain sufficient social distancing. Bookings can be made via the **offers** menu in your sQuid account. There are only limited spaces for Octopus/Starfish/Little Octopus/Little Starfish clubs so that we can follow the Health & Safety guidance, therefore places can only be booked on a first come first served basis. Please note that the school reserves the right to cancel bookings if we need to reprioritise for critical workers as we cannot exceed our capacity.

6. Chartwells Hot Dinners:

please note that the Autumn-Winter menu is currently on Week 1, the week commencing 8th June will be week 2 and so on. Due to C-19 the new Summer menu had to be delayed. Apologies for the inconvenience. The menu can be found on our website under Parents & Carers > Food & Drink at school > School Meals <http://www.stnicolasmary.w-sussex.sch.uk/page/?title=School+Meals&pid=1317&action=saved>

7. Seahorse discovery!

Mali, Kyra and Lucia discovered a seahorse whilst out fishing on the River Adur – details can be found at: <https://www.shorehamherald.co.uk/news/environment/girls-stunned-seahorse-discovery-shoreham-video-shows-cute-creature-2847980>

8. USEFUL HOME LEARNING LINKS AND RESOURCES – NEW ADDITIONS

- [Useful Home Learning Links and Resources](#) (click on link) or go to Pupils>Useful home learning links & resources.
- [Reassuring children who are worried about coronavirus - advice for parents and carers](#): Anna Freud, National Centre for Children and Families
- Books For Topics: [Five ways to give children access to stories and reading during lockdown](#)
- Sooper Books: unlimited free access to their complete story collection during lockdown (Sooper Books is the World's No. 1 ranked bedtime stories website) <https://sooperbooks.com/bedtime-stories/>

Thrive 365 #18

Did you know?

Panic attacks are relatively common, although often not talked about. Some people might only have one, whereas others might have lots over the course of many years. They are different from general 'panic' because they can come out of the blue, are not in response to a scary situation, the feeling is intense, and it lasts for longer than a few minutes. The symptoms are very physical, and some people even mistake them for a heart attack.

Despite this, panic attacks are not physically harmful.

What can you try?

1. Focus on your breath

When we're scared, we start to breathe more quickly and shallowly. This can cause light-headedness or dizziness which then leads to more panic and creates a vicious cycle.

Practise calm, regular breathing (not too deeply). Breathe into your belly, so it rises and take the focus off your chest. Breathe in for a count of 4 and out for a count of 4. It's best to practise lots when you're calm so that it's easier to use this technique when you need to.

2. Focus on your mind

Notice the thoughts you have which add to your panic. When calm, come up with some more realistic thoughts you can bring to mind to challenge the unhelpful ones. For example, instead of thinking 'I'm going to faint', replace it with 'People having panic attacks rarely faint. I've never fainted before. This will pass'.

3. Focus on your behaviour

Fear can make us change our behaviour as we try and avoid or escape things to stay safe. It's important to slowly and gradually face the situations that might cause feelings of panic. If you find you've been avoiding supermarkets, for example, start by going to a shop, then a short trip to the supermarket, and then gradually build up the time you spend there. Remember that panic attacks cannot physically harm you and whatever you do/don't do the panic will always stop eventually.

Thrive 365 #19

Did you know?

Resilience isn't something people are born with, and it's not something they're given. It's something people build - but they need to be given the tools to build it with. If a person is not given these tools in the formative years, that doesn't mean they can't learn them later.

Try these tools to either build your own resilience or to help children develop their resilience. Children will need to see this modelled and they will need you to do the questioning to start with. Eventually, they will internalise your voice.

What can you try?

1. Prioritise relationships

Human beings are hard wired for connection. Close relationships can counter the effects of stress (which over time can lower levels of resilience). Sharing problems can help to put things into perspective for us and allow unhelpful thinking patterns to be challenged. It's important to see the strength in asking for help - being brave and resilient does not mean facing things alone.

2. Build a problem-solving toolbox

Create a 'collection' of useful questions to ask yourself or things to do when something feels difficult or you feel 'stuck'. For example: What would [someone you respect] do? What's worked before? How can I break the problem into smaller pieces? What are 3 simple things I could do to help myself right now? List as many ideas as you can in 2 minutes - even the daft ones, let your brain free flow creatively and see what comes out!

3. Do hard things

Acknowledge your strengths and give yourself credit for the effort you put into difficult things. By working to overcome problems to achieve something you found hard, you develop a feeling of mastery. This makes you less likely to be reactive to future stress and more likely to handle future challenges.