



Welcome back letter – September 2023

Dear parents,

I hope you had a lovely summer, despite the weather. I am sure you will have noticed that the weather has decided to perk up now we have all gone back to school.

It was lovely to have all of the children back to school this week after the turmoil of the recent months. Many of us, and many of the children, will probably be happy if they never see another coach or hear the acronym RAAC again.

We had more requests for filming this week which I have managed to turn away, and requests for interviews have so far been responded to with a stock reply giving a factual account of what happened. The interviews themselves happened almost by accident as at the start of the day (on Tuesday) I had many requests and asked my office team to decline them all; persistence on the journalists' part and concern for the mental health of my lovely office team meant that this resolve cracked during the morning – hence the unsightly bald guy with a weird voice who appeared on many of your TVs.

I have been overwhelmed by your support and am truly thankful to you all.

The children all look amazing in their school uniforms. Remember that the only branded item of uniform we ask you to buy is the school jumper. All other items can be purchased at any other store. Please check the school website for more information.

On the subject of clothing, I am sporting a new pair of shoes which have given me a textbook case of "September Foot" - i.e. painful blisters on the heels. It seems to be endemic in the Tutt household and our aging stock of fading plasters are almost used up. If your child has blisters from new footwear and they need a break from them to let their heels heal, they can wear other shoes for a short while but please put a note in your child's book bag or email their teacher.

Ofsted

I am hopeful that we can now put the recent disruption behind us and look forward to a fantastic term ahead. While we are getting back on our feet this term, Ofsted are likely to come and visit; nothing works quite like a haughty judging by the professionally po-faced to lift a school's spirits.

They will let us know they are visiting the day before they arrive. I will let you all know straight away and ask you to complete the Ofsted online ParentView survey. This resets each academic year; there is no need to complete it yet as at the time of inspection its functionality increases and parents can give more detailed responses and comments.

Parking

I may as well start the school year as I mean to go on – that perennial issue about where to temporarily store the 1.5 tons of metal and plastic when dropping off your child at school. Please do park responsibly and with due



concern and courtesy for our lovely neighbours. Better still: walk, cycle or scooter to school and help keep our climate something that our children will be able to live with.

Phase leaders

Our phase leaders each look after one of the four phases at St James'. As always, parents' first point of contact will be the class teacher, but if after speaking to them you wish to speak to someone else, they will be your second point of contact.

Phase	Phase Lead	Email address
Early Years	Lucy Coward	lcoward@st-james.kent.sch.uk
Key Stage 1 (Y1 & 2)	Sarah Greenfield	Sgreenfield@st-james.kent.sch.uk
Lower Key Stage 2 (Y3 & 4)	Kate Jones	kjones@st-james.kent.sch.uk
Upper Key Stage 2 (Y5 & 6)	Anna Holland	aholland@st-james.kent.sch.uk

September drop off and pick up timings

Timings and locations are set out below.

Year group	Drop off time	Finish time
R	0845 - 0855	1510
1	0845 - 0855	1515
2	0845 - 0855	1515
3	0845 - 0855	1520
4	0845 - 0855	1520
5	0845 - 0855	1520
6	0845 - 0855	1520

Mobile phones and other smart devices

As time has gone on more and more children seem to be bringing mobile phones and other expensive smart devices to school. We would like to make it clear that pupils (of any age) are not allowed a mobile phone at school. If you feel that it is vital for your child to have a mobile phone in school, then we would ask you to explain, in writing, the reasons for this. If we as a school agree, permission will be granted in writing. The same goes for other smart technology enabled devices such as smart watches, which are not suitable for children to bring to school. Any mobile phones, or similar devices will be confiscated by staff on sight to be returned to a parent at the end of the day. If the child continues to bring the device after this then it will be confiscated for a week. We really appreciate your cooperation with this.

Miss Hayward

Pupil Premium

Just a reminder that if your child is eligible for Pupil Premium, as a school we offer to fund the following:

- Free school meals in Key Stage 2
- School uniform – one set of compulsory items per school year,
- PE kit – one set of compulsory items per school year,
- Milk,
- School swimming lessons (when available),
- One weekly after school club/extra-curricular club in school (including MSporti Sports Clubs, Gabriella's Dance School, French Club, Spanish Club, Instrumental Music lessons, Bricks for Kids Lego Club – Year 2 only)
- School trips, including Year 3 Carrot Wood and Year 6 residential trip.



If you think you might be eligible, please see the attached letter about applying for Pupil Premium. Parents with children in Year 3 will now need to apply to benefit from continued Free School Meals.

Penny Wardell & Angie Pierce

Meet the Teacher – Years 1 to 6

Week beginning 18th September, you are invited to come to school at the end of the school day to meet your child's new teacher(s). Years 1 & 2 begin at 2:45pm, Years 3 & 4 at 3pm and Years 5 & 6 at 3:30pm.

Monday 18 th September	Year 4
Tuesday 19 th September	Year 1 and Year 6
Wednesday 20 th September	Year 2 and Year 3
Thursday 21 st September	Year 5

Early Years

It was lovely to see your children today, taking their first steps on their journey through St James'. Thank you to all of the families that kindly allowed the Early Years teachers and Teaching Assistants to visit you at home. Although the visits are short, it was lovely for us to get to know you a little more and to share the children's favourite toys and to chat to the children. We look forward to getting to know each other ever more in the upcoming weeks!

If you have any unwanted toy dolls including clothes, superhero figures, cars, transformers, dressing up or any other age suitable old toys you may be clearing out, Early Years would welcome them. Thank you.

Lucy Coward

I hope you all have a lovely weekend.

John Tutt
September 2023

