



Newsletter – Friday 22nd September 2023

Dear parents and carers,

The new Reception children started full time on Monday and understandably emotions must have been very mixed for parents and children – both excitement and worry. The Reception children have done extremely well and I am sure that parents are very rightly proud. We have our own transition in the Tutt family this weekend as our eldest son flies the nest to start an exciting (and expensive) adventure at University. I am struggling to envisage how William could possibly communicate with us any less with while living away than he does when living at home, but we will miss him enormously nonetheless and this will be an anxious weekend. Whether your child be 4 years old or 18, we parents want the same for them – to make friends and to be happy, safe and successful people.

Unbelievably we are already halfway through this half term. The children across the school have settled beautifully and we are very proud of them all. It is wonderful to see so many smiling faces as I walk around the school, reminding me that I am lucky to have such a special and privileged job working alongside such special people.

Further on in this letter is some important online safety information, so please read through. Remember that we are always here to help or offer guidance.

Nuts

Please remember we are a nut-free school. We have already had incidents of parents including a bag of nuts in their children's lunch boxes, so this message is repeated (verbatim) from last year. If something contains nuts (a bag of nuts clearly falls into this category), it must not come to school – we have children with serious allergies who will suffer a very serious and potentially life-threatening reaction to them. Nuts can also be a choking hazard for young children.

If in doubt, if it comes from a health food shop/supermarket and has lots of random bits in, or is available as a pub snack, it is not appropriate for a child's lunch box. Better still, always read the label to double check, as nuts can appear in some quite random packaged foods. This is incredibly important so please be vigilant.

If your child has a restricted diet for any reason, including religious, please let us know so we can make a record, inform the kitchen and ensure the child is not fed the restricted items.

Ofsted

Most of you will be aware of my opinions of the validity of the current Ofsted regime. However, they have given us a clear indication that as we are on the list of schools affected by RAAC we will not be inspected this term. We can therefore expect them to visit very soon after the Christmas break.



This uncertainty has been going on for years and has begun to take on the vibe of classic 1980s “will they/won’t they” TV shows such as Moonlighting, Friends, the X-Files and, of course, Knight Rider (he really loved that car). It will honestly be a relief when they finally turn up, judge us to within an inch of our lives and then go away again.

Vacancy at St James’

We have a TA vacancy at the school – please take a look at the Kent-Teach website for more information.

Looking after our school

A massive thank you to Zebedee and Imogen from Year 1 for picking up rubbish on your way out of school yesterday. After this week's assembly about being trusted to look after our world, it was lovely to see you putting into practice something that will make a difference. I couldn't believe how much you found around the path and in the bushes - a whole carrier bag full! Please could this be a reminder to all of us to do our bit to help the environment by putting our rubbish in the bin or taking it home each day.



Miss Hayward

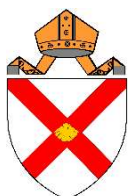
Children walking to and from school

As a school we are always keen to promote independence in our children, however we are mindful that safety and security should come first. Therefore we would like to remind all parents that it is school policy that only children in Year 5 and Year 6 are allowed to walk to school and home on their own, provided that the school and family have no concerns about the child’s ability to keep themselves safe and that the school receives permission via our Parentmail form (sent out to Y5 and Y6 parents last Friday). All children in Years R - 4, or those in Year 5 and 6 without permission, should be dropped off and collected by an adult (over 18 years old). Please note that the school gates open at 8:45am and these children should not be left unsupervised before this time. No children are allowed to walk home from any after school clubs, whatever their age.

Every child matures differently, and not all children in Years 5 and 6 will be ready for this step so please do not give permission unless you truly feel your child is ready. Whilst they may tell you that “everyone else's parents let them walk home alone”, in reality, very few of our Year 5 pupils are ready for this step this early in the school year. In deciding whether your child is ready for this, we recommend you ensure your child understands the Green Cross Code/Road Safety, is aware of stranger danger and clearly understands what action to take in case of an emergency. As well as discussing these things with your child, doing a few trial runs where your child walks with friends with an adult following a distance behind, or walks part way and then meets a parent is a good way to prepare them for this responsibility.

It is advised that children of primary age walking home alone go straight to an agreed residence and do not go home to an unsupervised dwelling. There is no legal age a child can be left home alone, but it’s against the law to leave a child alone if it puts them at risk and the NSPCC recommends that no child younger than 12 is left home alone for any length of time. For more advice see the NSPCC website <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/in-the-home/home-alone/>.

Miss Hayward



National Online Safety (NOS)

As many of you will have heard in your Meet the Teacher sessions this week, we have an invaluable subscription to NOS. Our membership includes a wonderful set of resources for all of our parent community, including fact sheets, informative training sessions, videos and online help from experts.

Parenting and helping to guide our children through this always-increasing digital world can be challenging. With new technologies, apps, websites and new ways to interact virtually, our children are more vulnerable and need more guidance than generations before. In school, we teach them to talk to trusted adults if they need help or are worried at all. Logging into NOS will help increase your awareness of what children do online and it will keep you on top of best practice to keep them safe.

In order to join our school community, please search online for National Online Safety, or copy this link <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/> Once there, it is simple to enrol:

1. Click the blue 'Log In' button at the top of the screen
2. Type in the email address you would like to register with and click continue (NOTE: The site has directed you to The National College website - their umbrella group, so no need to worry!)
3. Fill in your name, select parent/carer, find our school (search with our postcode TN2 3PR, selecting the voluntary aided option)
4. Create a password and accept terms and conditions, before clicking the button to create your account.

Once complete, you will have full access to the site and all the fabulous resources. An example of a fact sheet is attached, showing information for parents and carers about Roblox: one of the many games we know lots of the children in our school community engage with.

In addition to the site, I will be hosting an e-safety talk at the school in the not-to-distant future. Keep your eyes on the newsletter for the details when published.

Take care and I hope you enjoy the resources.

Mr Stevens

Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges 22nd September 2023

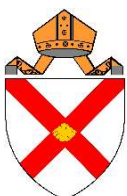
As we begin a new school year, so we begin the reading challenges. Each week, we celebrate each class's reading achievements. Here are this week's winners in each year group.

Year 6

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
George in Kestrel Class with 1,433,394 words	Kestrel Class with 3,746,002 words	Jasper in Kestrel Class with 15 quizzes	Kestrel Classes with 79 quizzes

Year 5

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Isabelle W in Swift Class with 1,211,207 words	Swift Class with 1,963,604 words	Isabelle W in Swift Class with 14 quizzes	Swift Class with 36 quizzes



Year 4

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Arion in Stoa Class with 130,253 words	Dormouse Class with 281,520 words	Hela in Dormouse Class with 8 quizzes	Dormouse Class with 38 quizzes

Year 3

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Dylan in Badger Class with 103,271 words	Badger Class with 281,419 words	Florie in Badger Class with 9 quizzes	Badger Class with 74 quizzes

Keep Reading!
Mrs Simpson

Dates for the diary

These are on the school website so please take a look (under “parents” and “calendar”). Here is a selection of this term’s greatest hits:

27 th September	Carrot Wood Information session for Year 3 parents
11 th October	New PTA volunteers welcome meeting
17 th October	Year 2 led Harvest Service at the church – Y2 parents welcome (2pm start)
17 th – 20 th October	Year 3 Carrot Wood residential
20 th October	Last day of term
30 th October	INSET day – school closed for children
31 st October	Children return to school
7 th & 9 th November	Parent consultations (3:30pm until 6pm)
24 th November	Flu immunisation for all year groups
4 th & 5 th December	Year 4 Christmas play (mornings)
6 th , 7 th and 8 th December	Infant nativities - all infant parents welcome & details to follow
12 th December	Year 3 led Christmas church service (2pm start) - Y3 parents welcome
15 th December	Last day of term
24 th December	Father Christmas visiting tonight
2 nd January	INSET day
3 rd January	First day of term

Have a lovely weekend and, as always, sincere thanks to you all.

Kindest regards,

John Tutt

