



Newsletter – 7th October 2022

Dear parents,

Autumn is upon us and 2022 is starting to get old – only 78 days until Christmas. The leaves are starting to fall, the wind has picked up and rain visits us regularly. Please remember to send your child to school with every day, even if it seems sunny that morning.

In common with 2022, I am also getting old – in 2023 I'll reach 50. Friends' 50th birthday parties are popping up now and it just doesn't seem possible. The main way that age seems to be affecting me is that my eyebrows are increasingly unkempt and will soon be completely out of control. All suggestions for taming them are welcome – hairspray directly into the eye area just seems unsafe and wet-look gel might not give the corporately professional look I strive for each day. Mrs Shortland recommended laminating (??) them.

Parking

I have been successful in increasing the frequency with which parking at the school will be monitored at drop off and pick up. Tunbridge Wells BC have agreed to send their "safety car" more frequently as well as ensure a traffic warden is on patrol at regular intervals.

With the way roads are randomly closed/diverted/dug up in this country, as well as just the sheer quantity of traffic in this town, I do understand what a stressful experience getting your child to school can be. Thank you to all those who are driving and parking thoughtfully (and legally), and even more thanks to those families using active transport to get to school.

I am photographing cars on the zig zags/double yellow lines and sending these to the council so a fine can be issued. I may also begin putting photos of offending cars in the school newsletter (and come to think it, maybe on eBay too – other online marketplaces are available).

Parent Survey - a message from Stephen Pollard, our Chair of Governors:

A brief note from me, on behalf of the Governing Body, to say thank you to all of you who responded to the Parent Survey we sent round at the end of last term and the beginning of this. We had a total of 239 replies, which is a fantastic response rate. We were particularly grateful for the many detailed comments that you provided; a number of themes arose out of these comments, and we will aim to respond to them as soon as we can. In the meantime, a summary of the outcome of the survey is attached to Mr Tutt's newsletter for your information. We hope you found the survey useful, and we intend to repeat the exercise before the end of the summer term.

Best regards,

Stephen Pollard
Chair of Governors



Parent survey – a message from me

We are taking everything expressed in the parent survey, including the free text section, seriously; both positive comments and those with concerns. The part that stood out the most was the school meal section. I am meeting the area manager of Nourish (our caterers) on Monday 10th October to share the views expressed and to discuss the way ahead to restore confidence in the quality (to be fair, I eat the meals almost every day and personally have no concerns with the quality, but understand that others may have worries and these will be shared) and/or the portion sizes of school meals for those who expressed concerns. I will share the outcome of the meeting with you.

All of the points raised were discussed at the governors' meeting last week and governors have asked me to report back on progress on all points raised at our meeting after Christmas.

Message from the PTA

There will be a PTA meeting from 9am to 10am on Wednesday 19 October. Please come along to the infant hall for your chance to get to know the committee and to help shape this year's programme of events.

Tickets for the Round Table Fireworks Evening at Dunorlan Park will be on sale at drop off and pick up on 19 and 21 October.

Vacancies

We have a vacancy for a midday meals supervisor, a part time caretaker and a teaching assistant. Please contact the school office for more information.

Folly Wildlife Visit - Year 1

Today, Year 1 have been visited by Chris - a volunteer from Folly Wildlife Rescue. The children found out about all the different animals they help and how we can help these animals at home. They sat beautifully as they listened and asked some very thoughtful questions. Thank you to everyone that sent in donations of cat food to help feed the animals in their care.

Harvest service at the church

On 18th October, Year 2 will lead a whole school service (except Reception classes) at the church to celebrate Harvest. Year 2 parents and carers are welcome to join us. The service will start at 2:15pm. Children from all years except Year 2 will be walked back to school to be collected in the usual way. This is because safely dismissing 540 children from the church will be almost impossible, so if your child is not in Year 2 please do not try to collect them from the churchyard.

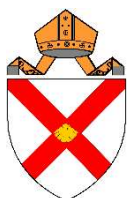
Year 2 children only can be collected from the church. If you have children in Year 2 and other school years, collect all of the children from the school in the usual way. Children in Year 2 not collected at the church will be walked back to school by the teachers.

We are still collecting donations for the Nourish food bank – all donations will be very gratefully received.

International story sharing

Do you have a story book at home in your home language? Would you like to come in to school to read your story to your child's class?

We want to celebrate our wonderfully diverse international community at St James. On Wednesday 30th November we invite you to come to school to read a short story in your home language to your child's class. You could explain about the story and about the characters and maybe teach a few words of your home language to the children. The children have LOVED doing this in the past!



Please contact Mrs Featherstone (hfeatherstone@st-james.kent.sch.uk) if you are interested – and even if you can't make that day perhaps we will organise another event after Christmas.

Sharing learning

Following the parent consultations on 8th and 10th of November, we have set two sharing learning sessions on 23rd and 28th November. Parents are welcome to come into school and see what their children have been getting up to at school! All parents/carers are very welcome. In the morning session, please come straight into your child's class with your child. In the afternoon session please go to the usual entrance/exit point in the school. You are welcome to come to both sessions of course if you have more than one child or, if you can only make one session, then you can move freely between classes.

Dates for the diary

Here are some dates for the term ahead. Please look at the calendar on the website as well. We are trying to ensure parents have maximum notice for all events. Although this is not always possible we will do our very best.

18 th October:	Harvest service at church 2:15pm, led by Year 2 (Year 2 parents invited to attend)
19 th October:	PTA meeting in infant hall 9am
24 th October:	Half term break
31 st October:	INSET day – school closed for staff training
3 rd November:	Flu vaccinations
8 th November:	Parent consultations
9 th November:	PTA AGM (infant hall 9am)
10 th November:	Parent consultations
23 rd November:	Sharing learning (8:45am to 9:15am)
28 th November:	Sharing learning - (2:45am to 3:15pm)
30 th November:	International story sharing (see above)
5 th December:	Christmas performances this week

KS2 Accelerated Reader Challenges

Well done to all the children for their tremendous enthusiasm for reading so far. We are very impressed and hope it continues throughout this school year. A special mention to Year 3, as this is their first term using Accelerated Reader; they are all keenly engaging in reading activities and are enjoying quizzing.

This week's winners are:

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Faith in Owl Class 1,324,654 words	Kestrel Class 5,773,668 words	Divit in Chaffinch Class 31 quizzes	Stoat Class 209 quizzes

Please keep encouraging your child to read as every word and quiz counts! Thank you.

Ms Simpson

Attendance – some reminders of our school policies

Late for school



If your child is late for school, please can you walk them to the reception area and sign them in using the Entrysign screen in the foyer. Please enter the reason for lateness (do not put **Late** as a reason). Remember the gates close at 8:55am.

A member of the office staff will open the door for your child so they can walk to their classroom. All KS1 children will be escorted to their classrooms by a member of staff. Persistent lateness is very disruptive for the child and we will need to investigate if it continues. Please let us know as soon as possible if there is a specific reason for your child to be continually late.

Illness

Please call the school absence line or email the school office and the class teacher if your child is unwell and unable to come to school. Please let us know the following information:

Name of child

Name of class

Reason for absence - eg. Cough and cold or headache. Please do not say poorly, unwell, 'under the weather' or tired.

Covid - Testing of children is not recommended at the moment but if your child has tested positive for Covid then please keep them at home for 3 days. After this time, if they are feeling well and do not have a high temperature they can return to school.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Doctor's and dental appointments should be made after school hours, if possible. Please email the office and the class teacher in advance of a hospital appointment attaching the appointment letter, if possible.

Religious Observance

All religious days will be authorised absences if they are approved by the religious body to which the parents belong. Please give the office and the class teacher plenty of notice.

Holidays in term time

Headteachers are unable to grant leave for holidays as a norm, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and is at the headteacher's discretion.

Where leave is granted the headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. Head teachers are unable to give retrospective approval. Penalty notices may be issued in certain circumstances.

Dawn Johnson
Attendance & admin officer

Thank you all as always.

John Tutt

