



Dear parents and carers,

In a change to the usual format, this week we start with some dates for the diary so that those no-nonsense types can easily get to grips with the facts. For those who embrace the nonsense, there is plenty to follow.

Dates for the diary

Most dates are on the school website so please take a look (under “parents” and “calendar”).

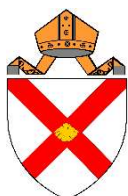
4 th December	Year 4 Christmas play (afternoon)
4 th December	Raffle ticket sales open - see below for more information
5 th December	Year 4 Christmas play (morning)
6 th , 7 th and 8 th December	Infant nativities - all infant parents welcome & details have been sent separately
8 th December	Christmas jumpers on sale today
9 th December	Santa Run – please see below
12 th December	Year 3 led Christmas church service (2pm start) - Y3 parents welcome
14 th December	School Christmas lunch and Christmas jumper day
15 th December	Last day of term & class parties
24 th December	Father Christmas visiting tonight
2 nd January	INSET day
3 rd January	First day of term

Newsletter – Friday 1st December

I expect many of you have opened the first door on your advent calendar this morning to reveal a whole variety of treats. In order of decadence these could be: a slightly fuzzy drawing of a candy cane, a small piece of chocolate or even a Lego toy; if advent calendars are your big event of the year maybe the contents are more decadent still.

Along with the calendars it is time to think about the Christmas tree. This being Tunbridge Wells, I know the correct protocol is as follows:

1. Choose a free-range, organic tree in August from an artisan seller (a reasonable drive away of course), with a rustic name, a muddy carpark and overpriced coffee;
2. Visit every few weeks and observe with some satisfaction your chosen tree grow and flourish; perhaps name it as you develop an ever-closer family bond;
3. Arrive this weekend to watch some bloke (billowing vaping smoke) hack it down and then drag the corpse into the boot of your SUV;
4. Decorate with 12 artisan, handmade, hand painted baubles (“they don’t make them like this anymore”) and a crystal star;
5. Set up a child free exclusion zone surrounding the tree to maintain it as a pristine show piece.



The Tutt family prefer to “keep it real”. We buy our tree from some backstreet tree seller in Crowborough called Del. If you need a 5-foot Nordmann Fir (no questions asked) he’s your man. Luckily the pop-up shop selling tinsel is only a few doors down.

However you source your tree, or whether you drag it down from the loft for the umpteenth year (before giving it a jazz up with a can of pledge), I hope you have a wonderful family event decorating it. One tip is to let the children do it, lavish them with praise, then strip it all back again once they have gone to bed and do it properly.

Staff news

I am delighted to announce that Sarah Greenfield, our Assistant Headteacher and teacher of Rabbit and Squirrel classes, is having a baby. Sarah will be leaving us after Easter. We are all thrilled for her and look forward to meeting the new arrival.

Sports update

St James’ got Silver at the Tonbridge Schools mixed Basketball event on the 28th November! We were up against 13 other schools and though we came joint first, our goal score was lower than Speldhurst who therefore won the tournament.

We did beat the winners in the final round but missed out in one of the games when we lost to St John’s B team.

It was a great event and our children were brilliant sports people and were lovely to watch playing as a tight knit team. This was all thanks to Cliff Allen and Mr Myers-Lampthey’s great coaching, as well as Mrs Naismith for being our sports leading legend!

Dressing up clothes

Do you have any old/spare dressing up clothes at home? Year 1 are looking for police, nurse/doctor, vet and firefighter uniforms; obviously we are only looking for children’s dressing up clothes.

Parent Rep meeting

It was lovely to meet so many parent reps on Wednesday, share school news and answer questions. We aim to have another meeting before the Easter break.

Free junior lunches for years 3 to 6

This is a reminder that our lovely anonymous donor is paying for all junior children’s lunches for the month of December and they would like to wish everyone a “Merry Christmas”. Huge thanks to them from all of us!

PTA Secret Presents Room

As I am writing this letter we have volunteers working hard in both our secret present rooms. The children are loving it and the wrapping is second to none! I just wanted to express our public thanks to all those volunteers for giving up their time.

Attendance update

As you will have seen in the last newsletter, we are now giving updates in each newsletter on attendance. Here are our latest figures:

School target	96.5%
Current whole school attendance	96.1%



Santa Run

St James' is in the news (in a good way - no need to panic)! Please click on this link to see the article. Thank you to all those who are putting so much work into this event. The article is on page 16:

[Read the Times of Tunbridge Wells 29th November 2023 \(timeslocalnews.co.uk\)](https://www.timeslocalnews.co.uk)

Christmas Jumper Day

All children are invited to wear a Christmas jumper, or Christmas accessory, to school on Thursday 14th December in aid of Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day. (Officially this is Thursday 7th December, however we would like to combine this event with our school Christmas lunch and therefore will be joining in a week later than other schools.)

Every child is invited to wear a Christmas jumper with their usual school uniform; if you do not have a jumper please do not buy a new one just for this event – see below for info about the PTA second-hand jumper event or accessorise the school uniform to make it Christmassy! Maybe add a Christmas hat or tinsel badge to make it sparkle.

The cost-of-living crisis is applying a lot of pressure on families, so we understand that not everyone may be able to contribute to the Save the Children fund. All children can join in, regardless of whether you donate but if you do wish to donate, please do so by accessing the Save the Children website at:

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/donate>. Please do not send children to school with any money.

If you have recently dug out last year's Christmas jumper and found that it no longer fits your child, please remember that the PTA will be running a second-hand Christmas jumper shop on Friday 8th December and are currently accepting donations for this.

Christmas raffle PTA message

🎄 Calling all amazing parents of our school community! 🎄

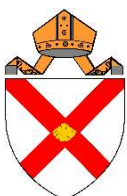
We need your help to make this year's Christmas raffle truly unforgettable! 🎁🍷

We are on the lookout for outstanding prizes that will make our raffle extra special. Do you own a business or work for a local company that could contribute exciting experiences or high-value items, perfect for the whole family? Your support would mean the world to us!

If you or someone you know is able to contribute a prize or help us secure donations from other local businesses, we would be eternally grateful! Kindly send an email to hello@stjamespta.co.uk or pop by the office by Monday. As a small token of our appreciation, we will make sure to give your/their business some exposure on our PTA social media channels.

Our annual Christmas raffle is highly anticipated and plays a crucial role in fundraising for our school. With the extraordinary generosity of local businesses like yours and our dedicated school community, we have managed to raise over £1,000 each year! Without your incredible contributions, events like our Christmas raffle wouldn't be the tremendous success they are.

From the bottom of our hearts, we want to express our deepest thanks to all the amazing parents who have supported us in the past. Your contributions truly make a difference! Let's keep the momentum going and make this year's raffle the best one yet!



Thank you all for your unwavering support. Together, we can make a positive impact on our school community.



Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges

I am really pleased to announce this week's winners of our reading challenges:

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Divit in Owl Class 357,890 words	Kestrel Class 2,089,133 words	Florie in Badger Class and Marc-Andrei in Deer Class 10 quizzes	Fox Class 83 quizzes

A huge well done to all classes.

Keep quizzing!

Mrs Simpson

Have a fantastic weekend.

Kindest regards,

John Tutt

