



Newsletter – 16th December 2022

Dear parents and carers,

Just one final newsletter before the Christmas holidays so that we can wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Thank you all for your support today, over the last term, and indeed the last few years. We are a very lucky school to have the privilege to serve such a special community. Please read on to the end for the PTA newsletter which follows this one.

Early school closure

I would like to apologise again for having to close early today and at such short notice. As you know we do not close unless we have absolutely no other option. Around midday the water pressure began to drop and then our supply completely stopped soon after. Sorry for having to end a school term in this manner.

We have plates needing washing in the kitchen and a lot of toilets in need of a flush. The latter issue in particular is going to be a very big job.

I know a lot of you have been having ongoing issues with your water supply and I hope this is resolved for you very soon.

Snow

It is actually very easy for me to declare St James' (and Rusthall) will open as usual, but that would fall pretty flat if it weren't for the staff team getting to work, many of them from quite a distance. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them publicly. I would also like to thank Mr Fleming, our site manager, who travelled further than any of us to get to work (from the other side of the Ashdown Forest), arrived early and worked so hard to make the school site safe enough for us to open.

We will always remain open if it possible to do so when it is snowy. However, despite my bullish rhetoric (which seems slightly hollow after this afternoon), if the roads really are impassable and the site beyond clearing, we may have to fully or partially close. We will let parents know via ParentMail as early as we can.

Oak class snowman

Oak Class have had a lovely time on the field this afternoon and we worked together to make a snowman. We gave it a tie and think it looks just like Mr Tutt! Here is a photo of it for you to see. 😊

Lots of love

Oak Class



RE day, 15th December

Thank you Mrs King for planning and preparing such a lovely day – the snow only made it better. The children had a very special day. Mrs King also planned the day for Rusthall school as well, and they also had a really lovely day. And it happened on a very special birthday for Mrs King (ending in a zero).

Forest school

Thank you to all the Year 6s who gathered together to help rescue our parachute from the snow in the Junior Forest School. They thoroughly enjoyed crawling underneath to get inside, where it looked like a cave and, all together, knocking the snow off. Well done and Happy Christmas from all of Forest School!



The forest school robin

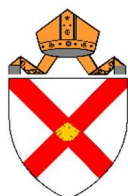
Here is the forest school robin eating out of some Year 6 children and Miss Greenfield's hand. Lovely!



Winter reading challenge

Kent Libraries are running a Winter Mini Reading Challenge to encourage all children aged 4 to 11 years to enjoy the benefits of reading for pleasure. The challenge is running from 1 December 2022 to 20 February 2023! The Winter Mini Reading Challenge is an online-only challenge enabling children to keep up their reading over the winter holidays. If you would like your child to take part, then sign up here.

If the link does not work, then please visit https://api.readingagency.org.uk/users/sign_up. Your child can set a reading goal and read anything they like. Each time they finish a book, they can log it on their profile. There are digital badges and virtual rewards to be earned. If your child reaches their challenge goal, they will be able to unlock a special certificate! You can find out more here: <https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/> (This link does take you to the Winter Challenge information).



Kind regards
Ms Simpson

International story day

We were thrilled to welcome a group of parents who shared their home language with the children on International Story Morning. The children listened to a story in the language of Ukraine, Hong Kong, Bolivia, the Republic of South Africa, Italy, Iran, Spain, India or Russia, as well as quite a few others, and through it learned a little about the country and its culture. Thank you to all those parents for their generosity and we hope we will be able to repeat this experience soon!

Dates for the diary

Here are some dates for the remainder of the term ahead. Please look at the calendar on the school website for more dates and information.

4 th January:	First day back for children
7 th February:	Year 1 led church service
10 th February:	INSET day – school closed for children
w/c 13 th	February Half term week
28 th March:	Year 5 led Easter church service
29 th March:	Easter RE day
3 rd – 16 th April:	Easter holidays
17 th April:	Back to school
	Year 6 residential week

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John Tutt

Christmas 2022 PTA Newsletter

Wow! It has been a fantastic fundraising Christmas at St James'! We have a lot of thank yous to share after everyone's hard work.

Cards

The Christmas cards, mugs and other goodies printed with the children's designs were as amazing as ever. Well done everyone who sent in their brilliant artwork. Thank you to Michelle Wilson who did a great job managing the project from start to finish.

Presents

On Wednesday, a huge team of volunteers wrapped 1,100 presents for the children to take home ready for Christmas Day. I'm sure they will all agree that although it's very busy, it's a lovely way to



spend an hour or three. So many excited shoppers! And a great fundraiser too - we need to finish the maths, but this will be a great addition to the Christmas total.

Thank you everyone who helped with this - Adam, Alina, Anne, Bella, Clare, Caroline Co, Caroline Cl, Charlotte, David, Deyana, Eleanor, Emma, Emily, Gemma, Gloria, Harry, Jamie, Jemima, Jessica B, Jessica W, Joss, Joyce, Laura K, Laura Mc, Libby, Lucy A, Lucy D, Lucy M, Lucy S, Melissa, Michelle, Mel, Nikki, Pam, Pandora, Phuong, Pippa, Rachel, Rebecca, Rosie, Sarah, Tamsin, Taylor, Tracy, V, Victoria and Vikki. And to all the year 6 wrappers too - what a credit you are to the school.

A special mention to the extremely hardworking team who collected and sorted donations, shopped for new items, set up all the gifts in the rooms on Tuesday afternoon and early on Wednesday morning, managed the rooms on the day and then helped pack up at the end. So many hours of work. Thank you Farheen Bannerjee, Kate Bloomfield, Jenny Heylin-Smith, Yorlenny Long, Emma Melville, Steph Nailor Stevenson, Chris Stevenson and Michelle Wilson.

Thank you also to the teachers, TAs and everyone else at the school who put so much effort into making sure the day ran smoothly and helping the children choose the right gifts. We couldn't do it without your support.

Raffle

The Christmas raffle has been another brilliant fundraiser this year. Jane Woolcott led this again and with help from Emma Stevens, Annabel Fletcher and Natalie Sharp, secured some amazingly generous donations. Ticket sales have raised £1,350 to support our school and our children.

The winners have all been contacted now. We hope you enjoy your prizes!

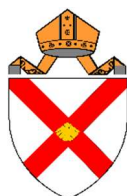
Please do take a moment to check out the list of supporters attached to this message. Most of them are local businesses and many of them are run by school families. Perfect if you are looking to shop local.

Panto

As the term draws to an end, almost 150 of you have been or are off to see Jack and the Beanstalk at the Assembly Halls. The idea for this came from Steph Nailor Stevenson and she organised the whole thing with Chris Stevenson - thanks to both of them. Thank you for buying your tickets through the PTA and helping to raise £885 to benefit the children at school. We hope you all have a brilliant time!

Brand new website

We have one more, very important thank you today. Chris Stevenson has created a shiny new PTA website which is a one stop shop for news, tickets for our events and volunteer sign ups. Chris and Steph have worked really hard setting this up and then spent countless hours behind the scenes,



creating reports, and tracking orders. A huge help with managing events and as an added bonus, it has our costs significantly by minimising third party fees for online transactions. Thank you both!

<https://www.stjamespta.co.uk>

More soon!

Thank you all for supporting these events with your time and donations and for helping the children remember everything that's going on.

Enjoy the school holidays and look out next term for news about winter discos and spring celebrations.

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kirstin
PTA Chair

