



Newsletter 22nd January 2021

Dear parents,

There is some good news in this newsletter; let's start celebrating all the good things in life! Life is what you make it after all, and as Abraham Lincoln (may have) once said: "folks are usually about as happy as they make up their minds to be".

To get this newsletter off with some early good news, right off the bat, Sophie Stock, teacher of Fox class, has had her baby! She has had a little girl, named Elle Olivia, and she weighed 6lb and 15oz. She was born right at the start of this term. Mum and baby are doing very well.

I have found it much easier to get emotional about (admittedly rare) good news lately. Fighting back the tears while watching a tearful elderly lady being presented with a re-stuffed and stitched teddy bear on BBC TV's The Repair Shop is just one symptom.

I have been dropping into the class Teams meetings this week, and seeing the children at home working so hard with their teachers has been incredibly moving. It has generated real feelings of pride at seeing the community working so hard through adversity, and also sorrow that we are not back together in school yet.

You may have seen, with the same level of dismay as me, that Gavin Williamson yesterday said that schools "could" open by Easter. I am trying to think of a positive gloss to put on that news...

...I'll get back to you.

Home Covid testing for school staff

From Monday, staff attending school will be using home testing kits which can give a result in half an hour. They are going to carry out these tests twice per week before school. **This means that there is a chance that I will need to contact parents of a key worker bubble at short notice before school to tell them that their child needs to begin self-isolation and cannot come into school.** We will try to let parents know as soon as we can after 7:30am.

These tests are Lateral Flow Tests, and following a positive result, staff members will take a PCR test at a test centre to confirm their result. If that test result is negative, the children and staff members in that bubble can end isolation and return to school.

Teachers' PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment)

Teachers will be out of communication for half a day each week to give them time to meet with colleagues to plan and prepare the learning for the following week. Your child's teacher will let you know which afternoon they will use for this.

Free school meals

If your personal circumstances have changed recently and you feel you may be eligible for free school meals, please contact Dawn Johnson in the school office on djohnson@st-james.kent.sch.uk who will be happy to help you. All families receive supermarket vouchers for £15 per week per child and nobody should be reticent to claim.



National online safety

As many of you will know, we have school membership to National Online Safety, who provide a wealth of advice about keeping our children safe online. There are a number of courses and webinars available for parents to help you guide your child in remaining safe online and banks of resources to help parents understand more about their children's digital world. Please take a look at the website or download the new app. Every time you complete a course, we get closer to gaining certified status with NOS. We would love you to take a look.

If you haven't yet joined, please use this link to our school's subscription:

<http://nationalonlinesafety.com/enrol/st-james-church-of-england-voluntary-aided-primary-school> , or alternatively, you can find links to the mobile apps here <https://info.nationalonlinesafety.com/mobile-app>

Once registered, you may also find the following link most helpful, as it provides top tips for supporting your child with remote learning: <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/hub/view/guide/10-top-tips-remote-learning-for-parents>

End of year reports

Usually the teachers write a report for parents for each child that goes home in March. In view of the current circumstances, we are going to postpone that this year, so reports will go home towards the end of the summer term.

Virtual Dance Competition

We are bringing you and your families a St James' Virtual Dance competition to brighten up your lockdown! There are 3 categories - individual, team and family and we will be awarding winners for the novices and the pro dancers out there. Full details have been sent out via ParentMail. Please contact Mr Hodges or Mrs Raistrick for any further information or questions you may have. We look forward to seeing all your amazing routines!

Accelerated Reader

Have you read a good book lately? Just like last term, reading should be continuing on a daily basis and we have all been impressed with the children's engagement in reading activities so far this term, using real and e-books.

Children can still access Accelerated Reader and do quizzes at home and we know lots of them are. Here is our unique school link in case you have misplaced it - <https://ukhosted71.renlearn.co.uk/2240930/>. If your child cannot remember their password, or gets locked out, please contact their class teacher. Although not all books are on AR, new books are added all the time so it is worth checking books you have at home or e-books. <http://www.arbookfinder.com> has all the books listed. You can search for a book title and it will tell you whether the book is on there and what zone the book is.

We are continuing the Accelerated Reader weekly challenges for all Key Stage 2 classes and celebrating those children and classes that achieve the highest scores in these challenges. Please encourage your children to complete their quizzes independently and to take their time answering questions.

Here are this week's winners - **22.01.21**:

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Number of Quizzes Achieved	Highest Class Word Count
Dylan in Owl Class	Jessica in Badger Class	Osprey Class
827,487 words	31 quizzes	3,493,916 words

Ms Simpson



Lockdown etiquette

Lockdown has given us a whole new set of social conventions to consider, to adhere to, and, for some, to completely ignore.

One aspect of lockdown etiquette which always fascinates and frustrates is the correct behaviour to adopt when out walking in an urban environment and encountering people walking towards us. I worked out an acceptable protocol fairly quickly, and quickly made up my mind which party should remain on the pavement and keep walking, and which party should duck into a driveway, cross the street, or enter the on-coming traffic by walking in the road.

However, what is the correct behaviour to adopt when both parties enter the road or duck into driveways simultaneously? And how much gratitude should we express to the other party while remaining COVID safe? As always with etiquette, it is a can of worms.

Sunshine

To end on a happy note, what a beautiful day it is today; that deep blue sky is like a summer's day.

Have a lovely weekend everybody and thank you all, as always.

John Tutt

Headteacher

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