



Newsletter – 25th November 2022

Dear parents,

Decision time: tree now or tree later? Get the artificial one from out of the loft (then dust it and tape it together) or pay over the odds for a real one which will then suffer a lingering death in front of the whole family over the course of the month? As you can tell, I'm feeling Christmassy already, and it's still only November.

It is Mrs Tutt's birthday next week. I am too much of a gentleman to tell you which one, but the numbers are getting quite big now. All of this means it is time to get a present of some sort. Mrs Tutt says "not sure what I want, don't worry too much, just get something small", but in my experience taking these words at face value doesn't end well for me. What makes it worse is that I have to go through all of this again in just a few week's time at Christmas.

Mrs Tutt manages the calendar, remembers the birthdays and writes the cards (even for my friends); it is odd how we divide up jobs in families and how unfairly the burden often falls on one person. I think I can already feel a New Year's Resolution in the making.

This is going to be a challenging Christmas for many families this year for far more valid reasons. At St James' we will make Christmas as magical and special for the children as we always have. Please do come and speak to us if you need any help with any school expenses or upcoming school trips; we would never expect families to have to go without in order to pay for something we have organised for the children.

On a separate note I would like to publicly thank Mrs King and the whole team (including the lovely parent volunteers) who led the Carrot Wood residential trip for Year 3. The mud and puddles only seemed to add even more fun to a very special few days for the children.

Fire alarms

We have had two fire alarms this week. On both occasions the call points were activated accidentally (embarrassingly by a member of staff leaning against the wrong part of the wall on the first occasion). This was exacerbated by the system failing to reset on the second occasion meaning that an engineer had to be called. Both occasions were in completely different parts of the school and were not linked. The children were extremely sensible on both occasions and exited the school calmly and sensibly.

Building work – change in exit procedures

The work starts on demolishing and rebuilding the mobile classrooms on Monday. An area in the centre of the school car park will be sectioned off for use by the builders, and the area around the mobile classroom will also be fenced off.

Routines will change for the children in Reception but remain the same for the rest of the school. At the end of the day, children in Reception will now be dismissed at the front of the school from the usual Early Years entrance. Please can Year 1 and Reception parents wait near their respective entrances so they can be seen by the teachers. Year 2 children will continue to exit through the usual gate, although we may need to change this – we will keep you informed.



School budgets

Some of you will have noticed the horror stories in the media about schools going into the red, having to cut staff, or going onto a four-day week. I thought I should just reassure you that St James's will not be doing any of these things any time soon. Full classrooms and years of careful budget management have left us in a strong financial position. This is not meant to detract from the severe financial difficulties that many schools are facing or the difficult decisions so many of my colleagues are having to make across the country, but just to reassure you, as we are aware some websites are sharing inaccurate information.

RE day, 15th December

The children are taking part in a special RE day across the whole school on 15th December. If possible, we would like the children to bring in an empty 50cl water bottle which is (if you can spare it) half filled with uncooked rice. Please can all children make sure they have warm coats and wellies on that day.

Anti-bullying week

Last week the children joined the nation in celebrating Anti-Bullying week. The children came to school wearing odd socks and after being part of an assembly to talk about what it means, completed activities within their classes to help them think about one of our school values of kindness.

Here are a few shots of the colourful socks that were on show:



Computing in Year 5

This week Year 5 explored using computer software to recreate Matisse's famous 'Vegetables, 1951'. The outcomes in Nightingale Class were excellent!





Accelerated Reader Challenges 25/11/22

This week in Key Stage 2, we celebrated the following winners:

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Divit in Chaffinch Class 1,252,921 words (+325,764 words)	Chaffinch Class 4,784,706 words (+1,845,659 words)	Minghao in Stoat Class 36 quizzes (+12 quizzes)	Deer Class 223 quizzes (+66 quizzes)

We also looked at the improvements made from the previous week's challenges for these children and classes. These are the additions below their results. There were also some other significant achievements so a special mention also goes to:

- **Faith** in Owl Class and **Isabelle W** in Vole Class as both children read over 230,000 words in one week.
- **Owl Class** as they also read over one million words in one week
- **Samuel S-J** in Chaffinch Class as he successfully passed 28 quizzes in one week
- **Year 2** as this is their first term using Accelerated Reader

Thank you for all that you do to support your child or children with reading activities at home.

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.

28 th November:	Sharing learning - (2:45am to 3:15pm)
30 th November:	International story sharing
2 nd December:	Parent Rep meeting 9am
5 th December:	Christmas performances this week – please see the school website calendar Pre-loved uniform sale
13 th December:	Year 3 led Christmas service
14 th December:	School Christmas lunch (change of date...again)
14 th December:	Secret presents room (PTA)
15 th December:	RE Day
16 th December:	Last day of term
4 th January:	First day back for children

Kindest regards,

John Tutt

