



Newsletter update – Thursday 17th September 2020

Dear parents,

Well, we are in our third week back and the beginning of term now seems like a long time ago. I feel that I am already in my mid-fifties despite “celebrating” my 47th birthday just a few weeks ago.

One particularly difficult decision that many of us make on a daily basis is how to safely push the button on pedestrian crossings without actually touching it with a fingertip. If this has been vexing you as well, I have found that my elbow is too large, while bony protrusions such as knuckles or noses seem just as unhygienic as fingers. After much thinking I have realised that using the pointy end of a key as a proxy finger seems a sensible solution. I hope this is of some help.

As a school and a community we all feel as if we are moving forwards, although any glimpse at the news shows us that nationally (and perhaps even locally) the picture is very different.

It seems clear that national adherence to government isolation/social distancing guidelines is patchy at best; apparently only around 20% of people fully self-isolate when required. Some people feel that whatever it is that they feel they need to do outweighs the greater public good, if they ever even consider it.

With this in mind I would like to genuinely thank you all for your continued goodwill and your support for the measures that we have put into place. The St James' community is fantastic.

School office/reception

This is a reminder that we now have just one school office and all visitors, late arrivers and children who are being collected if they are unwell should be collected from that office. The school office is in the junior building.

New entrants

The reception team are really proud of how well the children have started school and settled in. Please ensure your child lines up with their class and do not allow them or their siblings to run around the parked cars either before drop off or after pick up.

Drop off and pick up

With the need to maintain social distancing increasingly high, we will not be making changes to the drop off and pick up schedule for the time being. We already have crowding in the car park, but far worse is the crowding along the path outside the school and at the crossing. At present it would seem an odd decision to make this even worse by moving timings closer together.



We also have a large number of children being brought onto the site early each morning by their parents and then waiting in the car park and adding to the crowding. If waiting in car parks is something you particularly enjoy, please consider waiting in alternative, larger car parks at another time, where social distancing can be accomplished more easily.

Please can only **one parent per family** come onto the school grounds for drop off and pick up. **Please do not come onto the school site more than 5 minutes before your child(ren)'s allotted time.**

Registers do not close until 9:15am, so please do not feel under pressure to arrive exactly on time. If we can all stick to these rules, it will be possible to consider changing the timings.

COVID-19 update

As of today, we still have had no positive test results among the children or staff. However the R rate is increasing and you may have seen that a local secondary school has had to send a year group home for two weeks following a positive case.

During the past week, we have had to send a number of children home who have developed coughs or a high temperature during the day. None of these have subsequently been found to be cases of COVID-19, but we need to remain vigilant and cautious. We continue to appreciate the supportive responses we have when we call parents to collect. If you cannot access a test, your household will need to isolate for 14 days.

When to keep your child away from school

There seems to be a lot of confusion about this as we are having a large number of calls daily with questions and enquiries.

If your child or a member of your household has either a high temperature (37.8 degrees plus, to allow for thermometer margins of error), a new persistent cough (ie a continuous cough or 3 or more coughing fits in 24hrs) or a change in their sense of taste/smell, then the whole household has to isolate for 14 days while the person with symptoms isolates for 10 days. However, if they are then tested and found to be negative, isolation can end immediately. Check NHS 111 online for the latest guidance.

I know how disruptive/inconvenient it will be and I also know how difficult it can be to arrange a test at the moment, but that does not change the guidance.

If your child or family member has COVID-19 symptoms then one phone call explaining this is fine. Please call/email us again if you have the result of a test – we need to know either way.

If you have to collect your child because they have developed symptoms during the school day, you will need to collect any siblings at the same time. Your entire household will then need to isolate as above, pending the outcome of a test.

If a member of your family has any other illness, your usual judgement applies. For example, children with colds can attend school unless they have a temperature, new persistent cough or change in taste/smell.

If your child has had sickness and/or diarrhoea then the advice remains that they need to stay off school until 48 hours has elapsed after their last episode of illness.



You only need to call or email the office on the first day of absence.

Hot school meals

We will be resuming hot school lunches from 21st September. School meals are ordered daily. Your child needs to tell their teacher who will take a register each morning. There will be three choices each day. I have sent out a menu with this newsletter.

Miss Stock – Fox class teacher

I am very pleased to be able to tell you that Miss Stock is having a baby! Her last day before she begins her maternity leave will be at the end of term in December. Mrs Baker is returning from maternity leave in November. She will work alongside Miss Stock and then take over the leadership of Fox class in January.

11+ Kent Tests

The 11+ tests are scheduled for 15th October for those Year 6 children whose parents registered them in June. The children will arrive as usual and spend the day sitting the tests in the school hall with breaks/lunch in between. Children only need their usual pencils/pen etc for the day. They can also bring in a reading book to while away the time if they finish early and a small mascot (and I mean small – no people dressed as animals or child-sized bears) if they wish. I will send out more information when I receive it from KCC.

Abacus maths books

If you still have an Abacus maths book at home from lockdown, please can it be returned to school as soon as possible.

Teresa Woolgar

Teresa Woolgar, who has been working at St James' for almost 20 years has left us to begin a well deserved retirement. Teresa was a much loved member of the team and will be missed by all of us. We wish her well and thank her for her many years of dedicated and devoted service to the children of St James'.

John Tutt
September 2020

