



Newsletter – 16th October 2020

Dear parents,

I would like to thank you again for keeping to just one adult only per family when collecting or dropping off children, following social distancing on the school site, and for continuing to wear masks. You may have seen that more local schools have sent groups of children or whole bubbles home due to confirmed cases among pupils/staff. So far at St James' we have been lucky (although, as Obi Wan Kenobe wisely said in Star Wars: "in my experience there's no such thing as luck"; less wisely though, his alternative to "luck" was the even more implausible "force"), but as the infection numbers continue to increase locally and nationally, I am afraid that it can only be a matter of time before we are impacted as well.

With this in mind we are continuing to call parents quickly if children are displaying any of the three key symptoms and we have been grateful for your support. If one child in a family displays symptoms, parents will need to collect siblings at the same time and the family then need to isolate for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result. I realise how inconvenient this is for those families, but also know how much more disruptive it will be if we to have to isolate a whole class, year group or key stage.

While schools do not need to register for a site code for the NHS COVID app, we encourage you to download it and use it. It is another tool to help us to stay safe and keep the children in school, and that can only be a positive thing.

Today is the UN's International Food Day (interestingly, yesterday was the UN's International Handwashing day) and this week we have celebrated Harvest – thank you all for your gifts over the last few days which we will deliver to the food bank to help those in need. It is very gratifying, when looking at the items you have generously donated, to see far fewer tins with faded labels containing foods I have sometimes only heard of in nursery rhymes (tinned Pease Pudding was a favourite one year); I imagine that the last of these were discovered at the back of cupboards and consumed during the first phase of lockdown. If you would like to donate, we will continue to accept tins and packets of dried food on Monday.

Secondary transition

Kent have produced a rival presentation to mine, informing parents about secondary transition, which they have asked me to distribute to you and I have attached along with this newsletter. To be fair to them, in contrast to my presentation, theirs is an uplifting, life affirming and concise read, containing information which is actually useful. One key point to note is that although the deadline for submitting your choices is 2nd November, you can email admissions to change your preferences up until the 11th December. Details are contained within the slides.



Tour of the school for prospective parents

This year we cannot run tours of the school in the usual way, so I will be recording a virtual tour which will be put on the school website in readiness for after half term. You can therefore enjoy the tour from the comfort of your own home. As an additional layer of COVID security, please ensure you don full PPE before watching the video.

COVID test results

We would be grateful if we could see a copy of any negative result to make sure everyone is following the correct procedures. Please email a copy to the school office.

Ash class

Rachel Piper returns from maternity leave after half term and will take over from Martha Cunningham who has been doing a wonderful job teaching Ash class alongside Mrs Sweatman. Rachel is coming into school to spend time with the class next week, and Martha will be working alongside her for the first few weeks after half term to ensure there is a smooth transition. I would like to thank Martha for looking after the class so well so far this year. Rachel Piper will work Mondays to Wednesdays and Mrs Sweatman will continue to teach the class Thursdays and Fridays.

Fox class

Vicky Oakley will be returning to school from maternity leave in mid-November and will work alongside Miss Stock until Christmas when Miss Stock will then begin her maternity leave. Vicky will then assume the leadership of Fox class until the end of the academic year.

Letters in book bags & trading cards

At the moment, giving your child letters or written messages to give to other children in school is something we cannot allow; it is simply not COVID safe. In the same vein, we are not allowing any trading cards in school for the foreseeable future.

AIM 11+ support for Year 5 children

AIM is a local charity who are offering 11+ support to children from low income families. AIM have helped St James' families in the past. My views on some of the reasons for the unfairness of the 11+ are well known to anyone who has spent more than five minutes talking to me (as they are usually gradually edging away), so anything that begins to help to address that is something that I wholeheartedly support. I have attached a flyer to this newsletter for your information.

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

John Tutt
October 2020

