



Newsletter – 10th September 2021

Dear parents,

We have done one week! One full week! Seven days into the new school year and all is well.

We are slowly getting back to a more usual way of living and working (more on this below), so seeing the resumption of the reassuringly familiar Tunbridge Wells traffic gridlock (enhanced by a mixture of random road works and short tempers) has been like welcoming back an old friend. Please avoid the tangle at the beginning and end of the day by walking or cycling to school where possible. If you absolutely must drive, please do not park anti-socially in one of our neighbouring roads. Just for clarification, blocking someone's driveway or parking on a double yellow line are both examples of anti-social parking.

It was lovely to see the summer return to us after a six-week break, with those two sunny days this week. I hope that you all made the most of them; the nights are now drawing in and all too soon we will be wearing coats and Christmas shopping. I hope you managed some sort of break over the summer and made the most of what English tourism has to offer – in the Tutt family's experience it was a series of overpriced campsites advertised enticingly as "wild camping/back to nature" but which could all be described more accurately as "a field with no facilities and next to a busy road".

In school, the children have been settling well into the new routines and it is always lovely to see the children and teachers getting to know each other and establishing their classroom relationships. As always it is wonderful to see the new Reception children starting their exciting journey at St James'.

COVID measures

I am looking forward to the day when I will not need to mention COVID-19 in a newsletter.

As many have commented, the contrast between the tightly regulated situation in school before the summer and today's virtual normality is taking a little while to get used to.

However normal things may appear to be, we are still going through a pandemic and case numbers and hospital admissions are rising. Please be wary of believing anything you see in the press or on the news until there is an official announcement. As an example, despite what you may have seen in the newspapers, there are no plans to extend the half term break to two weeks. Saying this, you will remember that situations can change quickly and announcements can be made at very short notice, so we will inform you of any change in the guidance as soon as we hear it.

You will already know from my last newsletter that if there is a positive case within a class, the other children can continue to come to school and that NHS test and trace will handle all contact tracing. Although the school are not supposed to get involved in this, I have made the decision that we will let parents in the affected class know that there is a positive case (once we are aware of it), so that you can be on the alert and monitor your children more closely for symptoms. However, all children in that class must continue to attend school unless they develop symptoms or test positive.



If possible, please keep to one parent per family for drop off and pick up to minimise overcrowding and stick to the one-way system (in through the vehicle gate, along the drive and out via the footpath and pedestrian gate).

From Monday, Year 6 will be dismissed from the school office door to reduce the number of children leaving via the playground.

Please stand back from the gates at collection time, as we have a large number of parents waiting very close and blocking the exit, especially the KS2 playground gate. Please stand well back and wait for your child to come to you. Please also be patient when leaving.

Wearing a mask outside on site at drop off and pick up is not mandatory, although with the number of people in close proximity (especially at pick-up time) please do consider wearing one. Staff on duty (including me) may revert to wearing masks.

Flu vaccinations

In order to try and ensure we only have one pandemic at a time, flu vaccinations will take place as usual within the school on the 19th October. Letters should be going home today or Monday.

September drop off and pick up timings

This is another reminder of the timings. Please note that children need to be in school by **8:55am** in years 1 to 6. If children arrive later than that they must go in through the main school office and be signed in by an adult.

Year group	Drop off time	Finish time	Location
R	0845 - 0900	1510	Early Years entrance
1	0845 - 0855	1515	KS1 main entrance
2	0845 - 0855	1515	Year 2 gate
3	0845 - 0855	1520	Year 3 exit
4	0845 - 0855	1520	KS2 playground gate
5	0845 - 0855	1520	KS2 playground gate
6	0845 - 0855	1520	KS2 playground gate/main entrance

TA vacancies

We are currently advertising for Teaching Assistants. If you are interested, please visit Kent Teach (and search for jobs under "support staff", scrolling down until you find St James') for more information.

Reception request

Do you have any unwanted superheroes, cars, small dolls for dolls houses or plastic toy animals (in good condition)? If so, please bring them in for our Reception children to magically transform them into "less good" condition within a few weeks! We are short of resources like these at the moment, so if you do have anything like this at home that your children have grown out of, we would love to have them.



Year 3 and 4 trip to Hilbert Park



What a lovely start to the year! Year 4 yesterday, and Year 3 today have had a lovely trip to the park looking at the different features of a local river to get their Rivers and Rainforest topic off to an amazing start.

Dates for the diary

19 th October	Flu vaccinations
21 st October	Last day of term 11+ results sent to parents
22 nd October	INSET day
1 st November	1st day of new term Deadline for secondary school applications

Thank you all, as always.

John Tutt
September 2021

