



Dates for the diary

Remember that term dates and other dates are available on the school website via the calendar.

4 th July	PTA summer fair
8 th & 9 th July	Year 6 play performances to parents
10 th July	Reception singing performance to parents (2:45pm) - note change of time
14 th July	Year 6 Leavers' service (2pm)
17 th July	Last day of term
1 st September	INSET day (school closed for children)
2 nd September	First day of term & new entrant Stay and Play
8 th September	Reception start part time
10 th September	Kent Test (11+) Year 6
14 th September	Reception start full time
21 st September	Reception meet the teacher (2:45pm)
22 nd September	Year 1 and 2 meet the teacher (2:45pm)
23 rd September	Year 3 and 4 meet the teacher (2:45pm)
24 th September	Year 5 and 6 meet the teacher (2:45pm)
16 th October	Kent Test results to parents
20 th October	Year 3 Carrot Wood over next 4 days
20 th October	Year 4 church service 2pm - Year 4 parents welcome to attend
26 th October	Half term week
3 rd & 5 th November	Parent consultations
11 th November (pm)	Sharing learning
12 th November (am)	Sharing learning

Friday 3rd July 2026

Tomorrow is the 4th of July, and this year it is even more special than usual. I am not talking about the 250th anniversary of that time when a group of rich, slave owning tax dodgers took the moral high ground and declared independence from Britain in the name of liberty and equality. No, I am of course talking about the St James' Summer Fair! There has been a lot of work behind the scenes and the weather looks perfect – it would be amazing to see you there.

This is the penultimate newsletter of this school year; it seems as if this has been a more eventful one than usual, although I think I say that every year. This year's big events were, of course, the SIAMS inspection, the water supply issues and the recent heatwaves.



Other random incidents have lit up the calendar that remained behind the scenes. One of these hidden gems was when a backed-up sewage manhole exploded in the car park after Mr Fleming gave the blockage further up the system an extra big push. The cause of the blockage seemed to be tennis balls – we know that Harrison doesn't offer them on the menu so how they got down there is a mystery.

World Cup

Thomas Tuchel (England manager) has asked parents to come up with an excuse to keep their children off school so they can watch the next England match. If you do not follow football, the game has a 1am kick off, early Monday morning. I do not doubt Mr Tuchel's expertise in education or child psychology, but please consider this carefully. Firstly, you know how strongly I feel about the importance of school attendance. Secondly, in my experience, primary aged children rarely have the attention span to sit through more than 10 minutes of what is, to them, almost two hours of green-backed monotony, punctuated by the sound of otherwise responsible, rational adults shouting assertively at a television set.

In 2002, the World Cup was in Japan, and most matches were played early each morning. I was teaching in Southall at the time and our school opened early to allow children to watch England vs Brazil. My two standout memories of that morning were that most of the children turned up supporting Brazil and wearing their shirts (if even a single one of them had been of Brazilian heritage that would have been fair enough); the other was that only a dozen out of over 200 children, all supposed football fanatics, actually paid any attention to the game for more than 10 minutes.

In the end, the teachers who had volunteered to organise this took turns to supervise the children on the playground (where they played football).

In summary, clearly it is your choice whether your child watches the football. School opens at the usual time, and children are expected to attend as usual. I am not going to allow late arrivals as I do not think a child who has missed most of their sleep is going to be in any fit state to have a productive, emotionally stable day at school.

A great alternative would be to give your child an early night, then wake them up at 6am to watch the match on catch-up, with the advantage of skipping past the hydration breaks and half time.

If this were the final, perhaps it would be different but, over the course of their lives, your child will have the opportunity to watch the men's England team being knocked out of the World Cup at either the last 16 or quarter final stage on a four yearly basis.

Leadership arrangements from September

I just want to clarify the arrangements in place for next year, as some children think I am leaving the school and have made me a lovely card; others think I am going part time. Some probably think I am entering a residential care home for expired headteachers.

From September, I remain the headteacher (or technically, Executive Headteacher) of St James' and will be here for 2 days each week – usually alternate Mondays/Tuesdays and every Friday. I will be on the gate to speak and be visible to parents and children. Miss Hayward will be here every day as Head of School. Miss Hayward is familiar to most of you as she is on the gate each day (albeit a dry weather specialist) and has been the real brains behind the operation for the last 10 years. Next year the school is therefore in safe and very experienced hands.



School staff car park

I have written before about parents using the school staff car park when picking up from after school clubs, and asked them to refrain from doing so; this polite request has had limited effect. The car park gets exceptionally busy between 4:20pm and 4:40pm and, witnessing the ridiculous size of many modern cars and poor driving skills of most drivers (excessive speed, reversing without looking and drivers just not accepting how dangerous their moving car is to those on foot) combined with large numbers of children and adults walking along or crossing the drive (which I have absolutely no problem with), it is clear that a small person could be hurt. Child safety needs to trump convenience.

From September we are considering closing the vehicle gates between 3:30pm and 4:45pm. Cars will still be able to exit the car park, but will not be able to drive in. If this goes ahead, apologies to the parents who use the wrap around care and dance club. In the meantime, we will monitor the car park at this peak time for the remainder of the term to see whether there is any improvement.

Parkrun Primary School

We are excited to share that our school is now a *Parkrun Primary School*! This week in a collective worship run by Mr Stevens, all the children learned about Junior Parkrun and how it is a fun, friendly 2km event for young runners and walkers.

We have contacted Tonbridge Junior Parkrun and will be joining them at 9am on Sunday 12th July. Lots of our teachers and teaching assistants will be there too, ready to cheer everyone on and join in the fun!

To take part, please register your child at <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/register/> and bring along their printed barcode on the day.

Tonbridge Junior Parkrun takes place at Tonbridge Farm Sportsground, Darent Avenue, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 3JF. You can find more details here: <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/tonbridge-juniors/>

We hope as many families as possible will come along and enjoy this fantastic community event together!

Staffing news

We are saying goodbye to another member of staff this term. Milu Garach has been our School Business Manager for the last three years, but is now moving on to further opportunities. We would like to thank her and wish her all the best for the future.

We have had three student teachers training with us this year. Jen Burns is staying with us, but we are sadly saying goodbye to Ben McDaid and Alice Worrow. They have been brilliant students and will be amazing teachers. They have been a big part of the team this year and will be sadly missed.

Forest School

A big thank you to all the parents of our Forest School children this week, who have rallied to clothe and equip the children so well, especially finding thin shirts to wear over t-shirts - perfect clothing for this term!



We were amazed by how many eagerly chose to have hot chocolate and hope they enjoyed their time in the cool of the trees, in the hammocks, and getting drenched in the water fights, even though they targeted the teachers!



Reception Boat Making

We had great success at our Reception boat making last Friday. It was so lovely to see the children and their grown-ups working together to make pirate ships! Thank you to all those who came along and joined in. The children thoroughly enjoyed themselves.



Year 1 - Wish list

In Year 1, we have been working hard this year adjusting our provision to support the transition from Reception. This means we have been continuing to learn through lots of play. Whilst we have many lovely resources, we are really keen to add to our provision to further support the children as they pass through the year group. We have created a 'wish list' which is attached separately. If you have any of these types of toys at home that you are considering passing on, please do let us know as we will gladly add them to our collection. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions – sgreenfield@st-james.kent.sch.uk.

Bricks 4 Kidz – After school club

This club is now taking booking for September 2026. Book here for September clubs, select Autumn Term from the list. We're offering you the option to book Term 1 or full Autumn term.
<https://uk.bricks4kidznow.com/profile.php?id=7847&ts=1782734430>

Sevenoaks Fire Station - Open Days



Sevenoaks Fire Station will be opening its doors and welcoming families, friends and neighbours to their upcoming Open Day! Taking place on Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29 July, Kent Fire and Rescue Service is inviting people to discover how to stay safe at home.

The event will be packed with games, hands-on activities, an interactive activity trail, and the chance to meet the local firefighters.

To make the experience as enjoyable as possible, there will be three bookable sessions available each day:

- 10am to 11am – SEND session for children and adults with additional needs, with reduced noise levels and fewer people
- 11am to 1pm – Morning session
- 2pm to 3pm – Afternoon session

Although Sevenoaks may not be your nearest fire station, it is just a six-minute walk from Sevenoaks railway station, with direct train links from several nearby towns making it easy to reach.

Tickets are free, but must be booked in advance, so grab yours today!

Year 6 Icebreaker days – Bowles

Bowles is running Icebreaker Days at the end of the summer holidays for children starting new secondary schools. They aim to help reduce nerves and anxiety in the run-up to and during the first few days in Year 7.

We put children with their new classmates for a morning of team building and icebreaker activities, and an afternoon of a Bowles adventurous activity like a ropes course or abseiling.

This year we have days for Hillview, St Greg’s, Beacon, Mascalls, Sackville, Judd, Weald, Bennett, TGS, Skinners’, TWGSB and TWGGS.

To see dates and times, and to book your places go to <https://bookwhen.com/bowles>

Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges

Winners for week ending 19th June 2026:

Individual Highest Word Count	Class Highest Word Count	Individual Most Quizzes Passed	Class Most Quizzes Passed
Naomi in Nightingale Class 408,651 words	Chaffinch Class 1,436,063 words	Reuben V in Fox Class 13 quizzes	Badger and Deer Classes 71 quizzes

- **Swift** and **Nightingale** also read more than one million words that week.

Winners for last week – 26th June 2026:

Individual Highest Word Count	Class Highest Word Count	Individual Most Quizzes Passed	Class Most Quizzes Passed
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Naomi in Nightingale Class 313,873 words	Kestrel Class 1,170,608 words	Gianna in Badger Class 10 quizzes	Badger Class 47 quizzes
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This week's winners (3rd July 2026):

Individual Highest Word Count	Class Highest Word Count	Individual Most Quizzes Passed	Class Most Quizzes Passed
Leo in Owl Class 617,453 words	Owl Class 1,116,456 words	Kate in Nightingale Class and Danielle in Stoat Class 8 quizzes	Deer Class 49 quizzes

Many congratulations to all our winners for their fabulous reading and quizzing.

Summer Reading Challenge 2026 - "Read to the Beat"

The **Summer Reading Challenge** is returning this year. All the children will learn more about it when staff from The Amelia Scott visit school during the last week of term. We will also send out more information about it after their visit. However, if your child is keen to sign up and begin the challenge, it starts tomorrow, Saturday 4th July, in all participating Kent Libraries.

Happy Reading everyone.
Mrs Simpson

John Tutt
Head Teacher

