



Dates for the diary

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

12 th November	Sharing learning (2:45pm until the end of the school day)
13 th November	Sharing learning (8:45 until 9:15am)
14 th November	Parent Workshop - Supporting your Child with Worries and Fears
19 th November	School discos
8 th 9 th 10 th December	Year 1&2 nativities
12 th December	Reception Christmas singing performance 2:30pm
16 th December	Year 3 Christmas church service 2pm – Year 3 parents welcome to attend
18 th December	Last day of term 2
19 th December	INSET day
5 th January	First day of term 3

Friday 7th November 2025

“The internet’s down” – words which strike fear into the heart, especially when uttered in blind panic by your child. I am pleased to say that our own internet outage was short-lived this week – our highly skilled technicians did sterling work turning things off and back on again to restore our service. If you have ever seen the Simpsons episode where Lisa hides the teachers’ textbooks, you can imagine the relief among the team on Thursday morning when we were reconnected.

On Wednesday, we enjoyed bonfire night in Crowborough - a community famous for its open heart, inclusively warm welcome to all in need and free annual firework display.

We are fortunate to live near to the park, so our house is the designated pre-display meeting place for my youngest son’s friends. On schedule, a group of sullen teenagers arrived half an hour before the start, to awkwardly mooch about in our house. I went to say “hello” and all 5 of them grunted a response while staring at their phones in a semi-circle. The group then broke formation and walked through the back gate, still staring at their phones. Once the display started, they turned their phones skywards and filmed the display.

Looking around me, others (including adults) were watching the display through a phone screen. This seems fairly typical behaviour, and frankly, adults can experience the world around them in any way they want. But many of our children are interacting with and viewing the world less through their own eyes than filtered through a 4” screen.

Once the display had finished, and videos had been shared, the teenagers dispersed to their homes and their bedrooms where they reunited in whatever online game they had been playing, while shouting at each other through headsets.



However you enjoyed Bonfire Night, and whether you actually saw it, or filmed it on your phone, I hope you had an amazing time and, more importantly, that your children had an experience to remember - as in properly remember: viewed through their eyes and stored in their own little human hard drive (their brain), where that memory can change, age and flourish or fade over the years, as all the best memories should.

If you would like to find out more about rediscovering childhood in the digital age, follow this link to an event taking place later this month: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/papaya/1914663>

Coats

Life is full of puzzles that we may never really know the answer to. A local example is Carrs Corner roundabout, where an ever present and mysterious “klutz vortex” seems to prevent all car drivers from using their indicator lights properly.

A similar school-based mystery surrounds the children who appear on a rainy day without a coat, or in a type of coat that has sponge-like water absorbing properties. Children are as perplexed as we are – one child confidently told us last week that they had not brought a coat to school as mum had told them it would be raining all day.

It is a source of pride for our school that we go outside in all weathers other than torrential monsoon-like rain, so please ensure your child has an appropriate coat every single day, whether rain is in the forecast or not.

Sharing Learning

Next week we are delighted to invite you to Sharing Learning. This is a chance for your child to show you their classroom and some of the things they have been getting up to in class. This runs for two sessions, as in the diary dates above. Please come into school via the usual entrance exit at 2:45pm for the afternoon session, or come in with your child at the start of the day for the morning one. Parents can come to one or both sessions. If you have more than one child you will need to time your visit(s) carefully to make them fair! Staff will be on hand to guide you in the right direction if going between classes.

Owl class go swimming early on Thursdays, so if you are coming to visit that classroom for the morning session, you need to be there promptly at 8:45, as they will need to begin boarding the coach just after 9am.

School buildings update

We have had contact from the DfE about future possible building work – so far this has been limited to a new DfE project manager, a phone call and a date for an initial visit in December. I will let you know more information once they have been to see us.

Air tags/tracking devices

An Air Tag was found on the infant playground this week which must have fallen off a child. I would like to remind you that we do not permit tracking devices on pupils – however I expect that on this occasion someone had forgotten it was in their child’s coat following Bonfire Night. The device is on my desk, so please come to the office if it belongs to you.



School travel plan

I have been updating the school travel plan over that last couple of weeks, and as a part of that we have been surveying children on how they come to school. We have also been looking at targets to improve the number of pupils using active travel to get to school. Our Travel Plan is a document that we share with KCC to push for improved infrastructure. As part of the plan, we will be looking at ways to improve the number of children arriving by active travel; currently around a third of children are driven to school, while most parents live within a 15-minute walk.

Year 1 Animal Encounters

On Wednesday Year 1 enjoyed an Animal Encounter Workshop for the “Marvellous Middle” of their All Creatures Great and Small topic. Workshop leader Callum shared lots of interesting facts about his collection of animals - did you know that crested geckos can defend themselves from predators by letting their tail drop off? The children were delighted to have the chance to hold or stroke a selection of animals including rabbits, a toad, a royal python, a crested gecko and a Madagascan tenrec, which looked and felt spiky like a hedgehog but is actually more closely related to an elephant. Everyone felt inspired to find out more about the amazing animals we share our world with.



Mrs Ledger

Year 3's stay at Carroty Wood

Year 3 had a wonderful three days-and-a-night at Carroty Wood. Well done parents for allowing your children to spend a night away from you – you were very brave. I hate to tell you but the children had such a wonderful time that most of them forgot to miss you - tragic!

Many spent their very first night away from parents, having great fun with their roommates, learning how brave they could be in new circumstances and noticeably increasing in their independence.



Each class spent an afternoon, one night and a morning having adventures in the woods, building enormous dens and challenging themselves on the wonderful and increasingly muddy low ropes course, showing how resilient and determined they could be and surprising themselves with what they could achieve.

After eating their lunch, they climbed across stormy rope bridges, wriggled through tunnels and scrambled under nets. They pulled themselves across stepping stones, chained car tyres and jumped themselves along a smooth tree log in order to stop themselves from falling into wet, muddy water. Together each class built a FABULOUS den from branches and leaves and then we all went inside for tea. As darkness fell, we set off to find the den in the dark and all managed to get inside – what a triumph! Hotdogs and songs around a real campfire were a lovely way to end the day before putting on pyjamas. After cocoa and a bedtime story they were all ready for bed – well done to the two classes that gave their teachers a full night's sleep.



The following day had free Forest School style play, some organised games and, of course, the opportunity to make a tasty 'smore'. All too soon it was lunchtime and then back to school. The class spent the afternoon reflecting on their experience before collecting their belongings and staggering home.



Please do share how much your child enjoyed it with any Year 2 parent you might know so they are less anxious about their child going next year.



Well done all of Year 3, we're proud of you!

Huge thanks to all the AMAZING staff that gave up their own time to make this yearly trip the fantastic event that it is, and special mention to both Karen Phillips and Tricia King. Despite retiring last year, they were eager to be part of the Carroty Wood adventure once again and we were delighted to have them onboard - not just for the delicious bacon sandwiches each morning, honest!





Also, a Big Grateful SHOUT OUT to our parent helpers who were so crucial to the smooth running of the trip behind the scenes. We couldn't do it without you. Thank you!



Mrs Hadley, the Forest School and Year 3 teams

Parent Workshop Friday 14th November – Supporting your Child with Worries and Fears

Just a reminder that Angela and Vikki from the Emotional Wellbeing Team are coming in to lead a workshop for parents on supporting children with anxiety on Friday 14th November from 1.30pm to 3pm in the KS2 building. Please do join us if you would like to, the more the merrier. Just so that I have an idea of numbers, please email me on senco@st-james.kent.sch.uk to let me know you're planning to come along.

Mrs Wardell

Year 1 outdoor learning

Year 1 are in the process of adding some wonderful new furniture and resources to develop our outdoor learning area. These have been purchased thanks to the hard work of the PTA and the money they have raised. We now have new welly racks for each class meaning the children are able to access their wellies at any time to aid their learning, a variety of outdoor maths resources and tools to help us explore the world around us. The children have been very excited as we introduce these new bits so thank you all for supporting the PTA and helping us continue to develop and improve the playful learning opportunities for the children.

Miss Greenfield

Staffing news

We are delighted to welcome three new Teaching Assistants to the team: Shivani Jain (Oak), Kate Sawyer (Maple) and Hannah Willingham (Ash) – they have made a great start!



Attendance and punctuality

At St James', we are committed to helping every child thrive — and that starts with being in school, on time, every day.

Why is attendance so important?

Children who attend school regularly benefit from consistent learning, stronger friendships, and a greater sense of belonging. Missing even a day here and there can add up and affect progress.

Why does punctuality matter?

Arriving on time helps children start the day calmly and confidently. Being late can be unsettling and means missing valuable learning time — especially during morning routines and lessons.

Developing good attendance and punctuality habits at an early age also sets your child up for a successful future of education and employment. The DfE have reported on the clear link between attendance and education outcomes, and good habits start early. *[At KS2, pupils who attended school nearly every day in Year 6 (with an attendance rate of 95-100%) were 1.3 times more likely to achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to pupils who only attended 90-95% of the time. The full report is available here for anyone who is interested: [The Link Between Attendance and Attainment in an Assessment Year](#)]*

Our expectations:

- The school day begins at 8:55am — please ensure your child arrives promptly.
- If your child is absent, please contact the school office by 9:30am with the reason. If your child is unwell, please provide information about their symptoms. Vague 'unwell' or recurrent illness without medical advice being sought will not be authorised.
- We monitor attendance and punctuality closely and will be in touch if we notice any concerns. Please note, the DfE expects schools to issue a fine for any pupil who misses 10 sessions of school (5 whole days) in a 10-week rolling period.
- If your child arrives late after the register closes, the whole session is marked as an unauthorised absence which counts towards the “10 in 10”.

Let's work together to make sure every child gets the best possible start to their day, every day. Thank you for your continued support!

Miss Hayward

Play at St James'

Exciting things are happening at St James'. We plan to develop an unused, overgrown part of our school grounds, to extend our winter play space for Years R - 2. When complete, this will have all weather matting, allowing children to be closer to nature throughout more of the year. If you are wondering why this is important, you should have seen the excitement caused recently by a simple spider on the playground! Thanks to your generous donations of costumes, we have set up a dressing up box for these children to allow for more imaginative play - we have enough now, thank you, so no more donations are needed. We also have further plans to develop play across the whole school as the year goes on. Watch this space!

Miss Hayward



Football news



Both our football teams were in action again this week, with both the boys and girls playing Claremont.

The boys' team faced a very tough Claremont side on Monday. They battled hard, but came out with a 4-1 defeat. What was really pleasing was the way they kept pressing the opposition right to the end, scoring a late consolation goal and preventing a Claremont clean sheet.

The girls continued their brilliant start to the season this Wednesday, beating their Claremont counterparts 5-3. The team now have 3 wins from 3 and sit top of the league, having scored 20 goals already this season!

Well done all!!

Mr Fern

Nativity at the Trinity

Trinity Theatre's "Nativity The Musical", has a few familiar St James' faces.

It has Benji (Year 3) and Brooke (Year 6) in it. It also has some golden oldie actors from St James - Izzy and Al (who rocked the year 6 leavers play as Hornhonker and Captain Red Beard). Plus Sofia... it's a medley of famous St James faces!

They are all in the **Shine Cast** as well as Benji's dad, who is playing Mr Poppy in all the shows. When you book your tickets it will say which performance has which cast in it.

Tickets can be found here: <https://trinitytheatre.net/events/nativity/>

Have a lovely weekend.

Kindest regards,
John Tutt

