



Newsletter – Wednesday 3rd June 2020

Dear parents,

I hope that you had a restful half term week and that your children are either enjoying their home learning or have had a good start to the term if they are back at school.

We are in a period of “sort ofs”. Schools are opening to more children (sort of), the lockdown continues (sort of), shops and businesses are opening (sort of) and the public are now aware of what 2 metres looks like (sort of).

From this week, children of key workers and children in Reception have been coming into school. I am pleased to say that (so far) the systems have been running smoothly and our planning has been successful.

Numbers have been very varied in our new pods so far, with some having just a small number of children and others having 10 or more.

School phased reopening – phase 2

We are able to open for children in Year 1 from Monday 8th June. I will send a letter to parents with children in Year 1 tomorrow to give more detailed guidance on how this will be organised.

Phoning the school

As the phone lines are not working correctly at the moment for the Infants, could parents dial 1 for the Infant section then dial extension 208 to reach the Infant office. The Junior site where key worker pods are based is as per normal: press 2 then 5 for the office.

Attendance

If your child is expected in but cannot come for any reason, please email office@st-james.kent.sch.uk to let us know they are not coming and the reason.

Secondary transition arrangements for current Year 5 children.

I will put a presentation on the school website soon with information to help you begin to consider the secondary school choices for your child. If possible, I hope to be able to host a presentation at school in the new academic year for parents who would find that useful. Choices do not need to be made until the end of October, so there is still plenty of time. By then, we would also hope that secondary schools will be open for you to visit to help you to make a more informed decision.

One decision that you need to make now is whether or not to register your child for the Kent Tests (11+). This is essential if you are considering a place at a grammar school. Registration opened on Monday and will remain open until the 1st July. At present KCC have not decided how selection for grammar places will take place as they do not know if testing will be possible. Please follow this link for more information:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-places/kent-test/kent-test-update>

If you have any small inkling that you might like your child to take the tests (or whatever the process will be), my advice is that you should register them. You can change your mind at any time and withdraw your child if you have registered them for the tests. We have had parents withdraw children on the morning of the first test before; this is absolutely fine.



The link for registering your child is here:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-places/kent-test#tab-1>

If you do not register your child by 1st July, they cannot then be entered at a later date and will miss the tests (or whatever selection process is in place). You cannot change your mind if you have not registered by the deadline. Therefore, you have absolutely nothing to lose by registering for the tests if you are unsure which way to go. Your child's teacher may be able to help you to make a decision, but cannot recommend what you do. Email addresses are listed at the bottom of this email.

Once final point, which I make every year, is that secondary choices and decisions about the 11+ are your choices as parents, not your child's. I cannot imagine leaving a decision this important to a child; I certainly did not give my older children any say in the matter and will not give my child in Year 5 any say either. As with many things in life, your child is not able to make a decision based on their long-term best interests, as they will be influenced by where their friends are going, current playground gossip, favourite uniforms etc.

However, the amount of input you want to allow your child is, of course, completely up to you.

Keeping in touch

We would still like all parents to contact their teachers via the class email addresses as least once every week if they are not attending school. We appreciate that circumstances are not the same for everyone and that home learning looks different to different people so this could just be a quick email to say 'hello' and share that all is well in the family. We know that teachers are missing their classes and I'm sure children are missing their teachers and classmates. We think it is important to maintain links more than ever at this time and are exploring different ways that we can communicate with each other. If you do not contact the school, we will do our best to contact you. A reminder of the class email addresses is at the end of this newsletter.

If you need to phone the school please use the usual number, 01892 523006. You can email the school via the usual office address office@st-james.kent.sch.uk.

Out of office hours and during school holidays, if you have any immediate safeguarding concerns, please contact Kent Front Door (emergency out of hours) on 03000 41 91 91. If you think someone is in immediate danger, the best thing to do is call 999 for the emergency services.

An update from Miss Hayward

I hope you are well and coping, given this situation. With the current uncertainty around Covid- 19 continuing I thought it might be useful to signpost some support and advice that may be relevant and so I've put together a collection of websites surrounding areas such as good mental health, financial support and online safety. Whilst this list is not definitive, I hope it might be of some support for any of our families who need it. As always, please feel free to get in contact with me if you need any support at all.

Lucy Hayward

Good Mental Health

Mind - <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

This website contains information about maintaining good mental health including during the Coronavirus pandemic. It contains information on Coronavirus and well-being, Coronavirus and returning to work, as well as details of helpful organisations, public services, government guidance and other types of support available during this outbreak. It also has a useful tool to help those who need urgent help to understand and manage their situation.



Samaritans - <https://www.samaritans.org/>

If you need someone to talk to, Samaritans are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a week. Use the link above or call 116 123 for free.

NHS - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>

This website signposts 12 steps to support good mental wellbeing including practical ideas, links to short video clips and further information.

Childline – <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Whilst some of the information on the website is designed for older children it does have a Calm Zone which contains practical ideas to support children's mental health including how to make a Stress Sock and Calm Aid Kit.

As well as the information on their website Childline phone lines are available 24/7 if children need someone to talk to. The number is: **0800 1111**.

The Book of Hopes – <https://literacytrust.org.uk/family-zone/9-12/book-hopes/>

This is a collection of short stories, poems, essays and pictures about hope written by more than 110 children's writers and illustrators including Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Michael Morpurgo, Lauren Child and Anthony Horowitz. It's available completely free online as a PDF, edited by Katherine Rundell and published by Bloomsbury, and is dedicated to the doctors, nurses, carers, porters, cleaners and everyone currently working in hospitals. My favourites are: Be more cat by Kiran Millwood Hargrave and A Song of Gladness by Michael Morpurgo.

Online Safety

Here are some reminders of useful websites which can help you keep your children safe online. Remember, good communication with your child about what they do online is key to helping keep them safe.

National Online Safety - <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

This is full of up to date information about the latest games and apps as well as much more. They regularly produce guides for parents with clear information about risks and advantages of new online games and apps. The school has a subscription which allows you to access all materials. Please contact me for information about log in details.

Common Sense Media - <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>

Common Sense Media is a really useful website containing reviews and information about films, games, apps and more. Use it to find out about age restrictions, content advice and for reviews by parents and children.

CEOP - <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

If you are concerned about anything you see online, report it using the link above.

Financial Support

Nourish Foodbank - <https://www.nourishcommunityfoodbank.org.uk/home/>

It will come as no surprise that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of people accessing foodbanks recently with Nourish, our local community foodbank, reporting an increase of nearly 75% in referrals. Many families now find themselves in a completely different financial situation almost overnight. If you are struggling financially and are eligible, we can make referrals to Nourish. Please contact us to discuss this further if needed.

Free School Meals - <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/free-school-meals>



If you think your child might qualify for a Free School Meal, please use the link above to register. Once your application has been approved, we will be notified and will contact you about how your child(ren) can receive a Free School Meal or equivalent financial support.

Kent Together - <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/coronavirus/kent-together>

If you are vulnerable and need urgent support that cannot be met through existing support networks, then Kent Together may be able to help.

They can help with:

- making sure you have enough food and supplies
- walking your dog
- picking up prescriptions
- putting out the bins
- taking in parcels
- making sure you have someone to talk to (by phone, Skype or Facetime)
- checking if any planned appointments have been cancelled before you travel
- helping to make sure you have simple recipes to hand
- preparing meals for the freezer.

Thank you as always for your kind support and good wishes.

John Tutt

June 2020

Class email addresses:

Mapleclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Cherryclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Oakclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Ashclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Chestnutclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Beechclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Hedgehogclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Rabbitclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Squirrelclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Foxclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Deerclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Badgerclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Voleclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Dormouseclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Stoatclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Swiftclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Chaffinchclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Nightingaleclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Owlclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

Ospreyclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

kestrelclass@st-james.kent.sch.uk

