



Dates for the diary

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

4 th May	Bank holiday
5 th May	Election for a new parent governor opens
11 th May	Year 6 SATs all week
16 th May	PTA JamesFest
18 th May	Sports Day
19 th May	Year 2 church service 2pm – all Y2 parents' welcome
25 th May	Half term
4 th June	Year 4 trip to Wakehurst Place
8 th June	Phonics & tables checks this week
9 th and 11 th June	Year 5 parent consultations
10 th June	Year 6 trip to Birling Gap
17 th June	New entrant meeting 6:30pm
30 th June & 2 nd July	Parent consultations for all year groups except Y5
2 nd July	Transition/taster day and Reception stay and play for new entrants
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 (2pm)
14 th July	Year 6 Leavers' service (2pm)
17 th July	Last day of term

Friday 1st May 2026

Dear parents and carers,

I hope you have enjoyed the sunshine and warm weather we have been blessed with recently; the rainy bank holiday weekend will bring timely relief for parched gardens and sunburnt noses. Remember to apply some sun cream to your child if the forecast is sunny, even if it's not particularly warm – the sun is getting strong this time of year. Sun hats are also an excellent idea.

Spring sunny mornings mean that my morning commute becomes less of an exercise in self-punishment and more of a joy. The mornings have been beautiful with patches of bluebells filling the verges – something that even the fly-tippers (the road was blocked by a sofa & mattress combo last week on Broadwater Lane), or the clueless people driving their dogs for a morning walk could not spoil; turning your dog into a car commuter seems a particularly galling contributor to the household's carbon footprint.



On this note, we have had the air quality monitored in the areas in and around the school and are awaiting the first set of results. Thank you so much to Kelly Wilcox & Jenny Kitchen who organised and arranged funding through Amplifi ([Amplifi - New sustainability initiative launched in Tunbridge Wells.](https://www.amplifi.co.uk/)). A link to their next event is here: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/amplifi1/2186396>

Obviously, cars and vans produce the pollution that we all must breathe, although not many people realise that car occupants are often at greater risk than those walking or cycling. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council have very recently been allocated some funding to improve the area around St James' and make it safer for those who walk and cycle – I will keep you up to date on any developments.

School dinners

We appreciate that ordering school dinners through Arbor is a new system to get used to - it's certainly been a steep learning curve for all of us - and would like to say thank you to all parents for your patience so far. Most other local schools use a similar system so we know that, although change can be daunting, it is achievable. There are several reasons why we have made this change. The first is that it significantly reduces food waste as the kitchen can cook the number of meals required each day. It also means you are more aware of what your child is eating at school each day and can help them to make choices which contribute to a balanced healthy diet. Some of our children would choose to eat a jacket potato every single day if they were allowed to make this choice alone. Finally, it speeds up service in the lunch hall, meaning your child spends less time queuing, and more time playing.

A few reminders;

- School dinners need to be selected using Arbor the day before (minimum 12 hours) you wish your child to have this meal.
- Once you have selected meals, please remember to 'Check out' if your child does not receive free school meals. When we have encountered problems so far, this is often because meals are sat in a parent's basket, waiting to be paid for.
- Meals can be ordered up until the end of term. You do not need to do this weekly if you order in advance.
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From next Tuesday 5th May, if your child does not have a school dinner ordered using Arbor, and they do not have a packed lunch in school, you will be sent a message requesting that you bring in a packed lunch for your child. Our office will not be placing orders for school meals on parents' behalf from this date. Some days this week our office had to contact almost 50 parents about lunches – sometimes receiving a less than kind response to this. Whilst we understand that this is a new system which will take some getting used to, and that everyone makes the occasional mistake, this is not sustainable for the office team moving forward. If you are contacted about your child's school lunch, please treat our office team with kindness and respect.

Year 1 Stunning start

Last Wednesday Year 1 embarked on their summer term topic with a special day of "travelling". In the morning, they took their passports to the "airport" and headed through check in, security and the airport shop until they reached their gate. Once on board, they took their seats to watch a safety video, enjoy refreshments, and look at the sights they passed over, including Big Ben, the Eiffel Tower, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Egyptian pyramids and Lake Victoria. On arrival, the children worked in teams on a treasure hunt to locate puzzle pieces, which they put together to reveal we were in the continent of Africa. They then discovered that we were specifically in



Kenya. In the afternoon the children explored a range of activities, including going on a safari, and making animal silhouette paintings and Africa-inspired jewellery. Tired from their adventures, they took their flight home and enjoyed a landing over the city of London, looking out for landmarks they knew along the way. Year 1 are now feeling inspired to learn more about Kenya!

Mrs Ledger

Reception parents

Please can reception parents make sure that once they have collected their child from class that they do not sit in the year 1 outdoor area and year 2 outdoor space. These areas are heavily congested, and we need them to be kept clear in order for the teachers to see these year group parents. We also have children going to after school club so need to make sure the site is secure as soon as possible. Thank you

Girls' Football team

The girls' football team finished up their season with a 1-0 win against Speldhurst. They have had an excellent season - winning 6 of their 7 games and finishing second in the league. Well done to all the girls - you have represented St James brilliantly this year!

Mr Fern

New play area

Last week, we launched our new play area for Year R – 2. The children had a great time making some very impressive dens in this area - I think some of the adults had a lot of fun too! Whilst it looks a bit sparse right now, in time the grass will grow back providing a natural area that, as a hybrid between the field and the playground, can be used all year round. For the rest of the summer term, den building will be available on a rota so that children can spend their time enjoying this area.

Miss Hayward



Request for donations

As you know, we are continuing to develop what we offer children during play times. To help with this we are looking for some donations as follows;



- Dressing up clothes for older children (KS2) e.g. costumes, old clothes, props
- Wool
- Logs
- Tyres
- Drainpipes
- Shopping crates
- Cable drums
- Wooden planks (without nails please)
- Large cardboard tubes
- Carpet tiles/old carpet
- Large plastic plant pots
- Picnic rugs



If you are having a clear out now Spring is finally here, before you head to the tip, please get in contact to see whether we have a use for whatever you may be throwing out. Please email me on: lhayward@st-james.kent.sch.uk . Thank you so much.

Miss Hayward

Book appeal!

If you have any pre-loved “graphic novels” which your child no longer reads, we have many children at St James’ in Year 2 upwards who would love to read them. If you are happy to donate them to us, please send them into school; the children would be extremely grateful. Thank you.

Mrs Simpson

Here are some examples of the very popular ones:



Mr Steven’s Marathon update

Well, Sunday was the big day! After all that training, oodles of support and loads of planning, I was finally standing on the start line of the London Marathon! It was the most incredible day of my life, I will remember it forever and I was thrilled to cross the finish line in 4 hours, 1 minute and 14 seconds.

I have been overwhelmed by the support that everyone has shown these last months. Thank you so much to everyone that donated, offered kind words of encouragement and of course to the wonderful Kestrel Class (children and parents) for their endless enthusiasm. As of today, my total stands at a remarkable £3280 raised for Team Bowelbabe, CRUK.

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/running-with-love-and-gratitude-for-my-wife-leigh-and-team-bowelbabe>



Here's a picture of me running to the finish line on The Mall, just before the tears started!
Again, thank you St James', you're the best!

Mr Stevens



Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges

We have celebrated all of the following as winners of the AR challenges:

➤ Winners for week ending 2nd April 2026:

Individual Highest Word Count	Class Highest Word Count	Individual Most Quizzes Passed	Class Most Quizzes Passed
Kate in Nightingale Class 323,390 words	Chaffinch Class 967,950 words	Kate in Nightingale Class 22 quizzes	Deer Class 87 quizzes

➤ Winners for last term (Term 4 2026):

Individual Highest Word Count	Class Highest Word Count	Individual Most Quizzes Passed	Class Most Quizzes Passed
Kate in Nightingale Class 1,236,068 words	Chaffinch Class 6,929,077 words	Imogen in Deer Class 82 quizzes	Deer Class 520 quizzes

- **Every class** read more than one million words last term.
- **All but one class** read more than two million words.
- **Swift** also read more than 6 million words last term.
- By the end of last term, we had **43 Word Millionaires** and **18 Word Multi-Millionaires** in school.

➤ Winners for last week (24th April 2026):

Individual Highest Word Count	Class Highest Word Count	Individual Most Quizzes Passed	Class Most Quizzes Passed



Aaron in Chaffinch Class 584,698 words	Dormouse Class 1,763,053 words	Naomi in Nightingale Class 14 quizzes	Deer Class 78 quizzes
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- **Nightingale** and **Osprey** also read more than one million words this week.

➤ **Winners for this week (1st May 2026):**

Individual Highest Word Count	Class Highest Word Count	Individual Most Quizzes Passed	Class Most Quizzes Passed
Ivy in Owl Class 558,997 words	Kestrel Class 1,757,407 words	Sienna in Deer Class 22 quizzes	Deer Class 99 quizzes

- **Owl, Osprey** and **Deer** also read more than one million words this week.

Many congratulations to all our winners. Keep reading everyone!

Mrs Simpson

Free paediatric information event for parents

Nuffield Health are hosting **Little Lives, Big Questions**, a series of evening talks led by our hospital consultants, focusing on some of the most common health concerns affecting babies and children. The sessions are designed to offer **clear, reassuring advice**, alongside the opportunity for parents to ask questions in a relaxed and supportive setting.

The event takes place on **12th and 13th May** and will be held at the **Nuffield Health Tunbridge Wells Fitness & Wellbeing Centre**. Parents are able to attend individual sessions depending on what is most relevant to their child. Please see attached a poster with full details.

PTA – Second Hand Uniform

Huge thanks to the uniform team for running the sale at the end of last term. They have raised over £600 for the school! Next sales will be on the **8th May, 5th June, the summer fair, and the new parents evening**.

To become a uniform team volunteer please use this link:

https://chat.whatsapp.com/F0Vj5bzXcpS27zcXeguXo0?mode=gi_t

Have a brilliant bank holiday!

John Tutt
Head Teacher

