

# ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

*"Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community"*



## NEWSLETTER

12<sup>th</sup> November 2021



*'We will remember them*

The school fell silent on Thursday morning as we came together for collective worship as a school community at 11 o'clock to observe 2 minutes silence in memory of all those lost in war and conflict. We also remembered all those families who have been affected by war; men, women and children. It is so important that we mark Armistice Day or Remembrance Day in this way. During World War I alone approximately nine million people were killed, millions more were injured and families were destroyed. The children marked this period of silence impeccably, reflecting upon the ultimate sacrifice made by the many so that we may live in peace today. We shared the words of hope and commitment:

**'When you go home  
tell them of us and say,  
for your tomorrow  
we gave our today'.**

Today we were also in attendance at the Brentwood branch of The Royal British Legion Schools' Service when our House Captains laid a wreath on behalf of St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School. Having not been able to attend last year due to COVID-19 restrictions it was wonderful to be back at this event and pay our respects to our local heroes.

Thank you to everyone who has already sent in a shoebox for the Operation Christmas Child appeal. I have witnessed a growing number being carried into school and carefully stored in the classrooms over the course of this week. Our collection date for the pick up of shoeboxes is Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 so all completed boxes must be in by **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021** to ensure they get to vulnerable children ready for Christmas. Thank you for your support of this very worthwhile cause.

As always there are a number of important reminders in this newsletter regarding up and coming events and I hope you will respond to them accordingly. Please remember that most of the correspondence we send out to you is always freely accessible via Parent Hub or from the school website, so if you think you may have missed a letter or it does not arrive safely home with your child, please visit [www.stthomasjnr.org](http://www.stthomasjnr.org) or check your Parent Hub channels.

### Staffing Update

I regret to inform you that **Mrs Joanne Watts** our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) will be leaving St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School at the end of this term. Mrs Watts has tendered her resignation and will be moving on to another SENCo position at a Junior School in Galleywood. Mrs Watts is taking the opportunity to reduce her working commitment to 2 days per week and spend more time with her young family. We are very sad to see Mrs Watts leave our school and I am sure you will join me in thanking her for her hard work, dedication and commitment to supporting special educational needs provision in our school. I know many of you will have been supported by Mrs Watts during her time at the school.

The Governing Body have been able to appoint a new Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) to take up the post from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. The Governing Body are delighted to confirm that **Mrs Chloe Moran** will be returning to St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School to take up this crucial role on a permanent, part-time basis. Many of you will be aware that Mrs Moran has recently covered two periods of maternity, the last one finishing in July 2021. Mrs Moran's working days will be Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The Governing Body are very pleased to have recruited Mrs Moran to this position bringing with her many years of experience as a senior leader, SENCo and her up to date knowledge of the families and children in our school. I am sure you will give her a warm welcome back!

## PTA Fundraising & Events

Thank you to everyone who took part in the recent sponsored Times Tables Rock Stars battle. We had an amazing response from our children supported by their families and raised a staggering £754.50 for our school. I am delighted with this achievement and to know that whilst raising money children were also improving their times tables knowledge – a win win situation!!

The PTA are excited to confirm that our annual Christmas Shopping evening is going ahead this year on **Thursday 25th November** from **6.30pm to 8.30pm** in the School Hall. There will be a wide range of Christmas gifts on sale, alongside games run by the PTA, seasonal refreshments and the raffle prize draw. There will also be a special festive performance by the School Choir. We would like to invite our whole school community to attend and would also be very grateful for any donations of bottles (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) for the bottle tombola. PTA members will be at the school gate on Monday (15th November) and Friday (19th November) and by the second hand uniform box after school next Wednesday (17th November) and Friday (19th November) to receive donations. Please note that donations of alcohol must be handed to the PTA by an adult and not sent in with children. We have also sent home raffle tickets, so that every family can be in with a chance of winning one of our amazing prizes.

On **Thursday 2nd December** the PTA will be holding their Children's Christmas Bazaar which is a wonderful opportunity for your children to do some Christmas shopping. Each class will have a chance to go to the school hall on this morning to purchase a range of gifts for members of the family. Further details will be shared with your children nearer the time.



## Year 2-3 Admissions for September 2022

The process for Year 2 to Year 3 transfers for Year 3 admissions into junior schools for September 2022 requires that parents of current Year 2 children at an infant school need to make a formal application to the Local Authority and can do this via their website [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions).

The junior admissions round opened on **8th November 2021**, for parents of children to apply for a junior school (Year 3) place for September 2022.

The statutory national closing date for applications is **15th January 2022**.

I have written separately to all the parents of children currently in Year 2 of the Infant School this week explaining the importance of making this application through the Local Authority. However, if you know of parents who are in this position please can you remind them of the importance of making this application before the deadline.

In the week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 we are looking forward to welcoming some of these parents as they visit the school for our Year 2 Parent Tours. This is an opportunity for them to learn a little more about the school and to see the school in action over the course of the afternoon.

## School Closures



I never like to use the 's' word but as we move further through the autumn and closer to winter we need to talk about snow!! At this time of year we must be realistic and be prepared for the onset of winter and the colder weather it will inevitably bring and our response to snow which may enforce a school closure. A few years ago we were informed that the local radio stations will **no longer** be announcing or publicising via their websites the school closures lists. Instead Essex County Council will be continuing to use their notification system to schools. Schools are now able to complete a short notification either on the day or the day before the closure via the secure access area on ESI. Once the notification is submitted a live feed will appear on the **Essex.gov** website ([www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk)) so parents can stay informed. Closure lists on the Essex website will constantly update as and when notifications

are received. Closure lists for the next day will go live the night before so parents can plan ahead. Once again we are being requested to direct parents to check the Essex County Council website for closure information. In addition, we will continue to use other means such as our Parent Hub service or our school website to inform parents of closures.

## Coats!

With the colder weather now starting to appear I would like to give a general reminder about coats. Rather worryingly we still have a growing number of children who seem to come to school without a coat. Many of you may arrive by car in the morning but the children still need a coat in school to wear at morning break and lunchtime. Please ensure your child has a coat in school every day and that it is clearly named. The staff are constantly reminding children to put their coats on during the day and we hope by wrapping up we can prevent coughs and colds developing. Thank you.



## Christmas Productions 2021 – Lower & Upper School

This year we are delighted that our Christmas productions will be able to make a welcome return, after their absence from our festive calendar in 2020, albeit with necessary changes in light of the ongoing pandemic and our associated risk assessments. However, it is important to note that the information below is subject to change at short notice to reflect the COVID-19 situation in school as well as responding to local and national guidance.

We have undertaken an annual review of the arrangements for the Christmas productions in light of concerns over COVID-19, health and safety and safeguarding. It is very important that whilst we all enjoy the Christmas productions which the children and staff work so hard to prepare, we are all safe from potential dangers.

So as to protect our children and audience as well as meet fire regulations we are limiting the audience of each **Lower School** performance to **100** people. This will allow us to ensure there is adequate space, ventilation and control of CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the school hall. We would also respectfully ask that members of the audience wear a face covering whilst in the school hall (unless exempt).

For the Lower School production there will be three performances:

Lower School (Year 3 & 4) will be performing **"Angels On High"** on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December and Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021. The first performance will be on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 2:00p.m. This will be followed by a second performance on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 9:30a.m. and a third performance on the same day at 2:00p.m. There will be no evening performance.

The afternoon performances are strictly for adults only; children under 12 years of age and babies will not be admitted under any circumstance.

Fr Mark has kindly agreed that our **Upper School** Carol Concert can take place at St Thomas of Canterbury Church. This venue will allow us to have a larger audience and take advantage of the increased space and air circulation. The audience size for each Upper School performance will be limited to **200**. We would also respectfully ask that members of the audience wear a face covering whilst in the church (unless exempt).

**Upper School** (Year 5 & 6) will be preparing a service of Christmas readings and carols/songs to be shared at St Thomas of Canterbury Church on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021. The first performance will be at 2:00p.m. with an evening performance on the same day at 7:00p.m. The evening performance is strictly for adults only; children under 12 years of age and babies will not be admitted under any circumstance.

The evening service at the church will also be live streamed via Zoom for those unable to attend in person and details of how to join this will be shared nearer the occasion.

The Upper School will perform an end of year production at the end of the summer term 2022 instead of a Christmas production. In this way the children in Upper School can spend more time during this autumn term on their curriculum needs at this crucial time and in preparation for statutory assessments in May.

We will continue issuing tickets for entry so we can monitor adults/visitors who attend the performances and ensure they are legitimate visitors to the school and church.

Each family is allocated **2 tickets** in total. Please complete the form at the end of this newsletter, or fill in the paper copy sent home with your child, to indicate which performance you would like to receive tickets for, indicating your 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> preference. First preferences will be allocated on a first come first served basis. **You will need your ticket to gain entrance to the hall or church.**

Requests for tickets must be received by **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021.**

## Finally....

The Brentwood Foodbank have issued us with a certificate of thanks for all the donations received as part of our Harvest collection before half term. The Infant School also supported the Brentwood Foodbank and between the two schools we donated a total weight of **418.85kg** – which is amazing!

The School Office spend an increasing amount of time each week chasing parents who are in arrears with their school dinner payments. Please can I remind you, once again, that the school does not offer credit and all school dinners must be paid for in advance. Please ensure your Parent Pay accounts are kept up to date and in credit. For parents who persistently fall into arrears we may ask you to start providing packed lunches for your children to eat at lunch time. If you feel you may be eligible for free school meals then please see the information on our school website or speak to Mrs Lawrence in the School Office.

Thank you for your continued support and have a good weekend.

**Mr D. Moran**  
Headteacher



**And...** please remember if you have any questions or queries or comments feel free to contact us: [admin@stthomasjnr.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stthomasjnr.essex.sch.uk)

**Christmas Productions – Ticket Request Form 2021**

**LOWER SCHOOL (YEAR 3 & 4) – "Angels On High"**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Number of Tickets</b>	<b>Preference (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>)</b>
<b>Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – 2:00p.m.</b> <i>(Adults only – children under 12 years of age and babies will not be admitted)</i>		
<b>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – 9:30a.m.</b>		
<b>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – 2:00p.m.</b> <i>(Adults only – children under 12 years of age and babies will not be admitted)</i>		

**UPPER SCHOOL (YEAR 5 & 6) – Carol Concert**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Number of Tickets</b>	<b>Preference (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>)</b>
<b>Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – 2:00p.m.</b>		
<b>Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – 7:00p.m.</b> <i>(Adults only – children under 12 years of age and babies will not be admitted)</i>		