

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

26th November 2021



This Sunday we begin the season of Advent and I'm sure you will all be enjoying the daily ritual of opening the door on your Advent calendars or lighting your Advent candles from Wednesday next week. The count down now begins not only to the end of a busy and challenging autumn term but to Christmas itself. At this time of year it is important to be reminded of the gift of giving rather than receiving. As we are reminded in Acts 20:35

"Remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Very often at this busy time of year it is hard to remain focused on the true meaning of Christmas; God giving us the ultimate gift of His son Jesus Christ. As much as we enjoy receiving Christmas presents let us also experience great joy in the gift of giving.

This gift of giving has certainly been in evidence in school over the past few weeks. Once again we had a fantastic response to Operation Christmas Child and the shoebox appeal. We collected and safely sent off **94** shoeboxes which I am sure will be very gratefully received and bring much joy to the children receiving them at Christmas. This coincided with our fundraising activities for the annual Children in Need appeal held last Friday. Thanks to your generosity we managed to raise an amazing **£1343**! You may have also seen that some of our children also featured on the television coverage of Children in Need! Congratulations and thank you to Class 6P, Miss Pullin and all those who helped organise and support this event.



We continue to experience positive cases of COVID-19 within our school community but thankfully these seem to be levelling off, although we are keeping a watchful eye on the situation. It is very important not to be complacent and recognise signs and symptoms that may be COVID-19 related. It is also important to accurately record any child's absence promptly via Studybugs. If you feel your child's absence is COVID-19 related or they are having a LFD or PCR test please make sure you inform the School Office as soon as this test is taken. We are required to keep an accurate record of suspected and confirmed cases. Confirmed cases are also shared anonymously with the Local Authority and Essex & Southend Contact Tracing Team. Please help us to ensure our whole school community is safe – thank you!

School Performances 2021 – Lower & Upper School

The children and staff continue to work incredibly hard in preparation for the Lower and Upper School Christmas performances which are fast approaching. This year we have had the added challenge of high absence rates due to COVID-19 and other seasonal illnesses which has made rehearsals very tricky! Despite this rehearsals are going well and Lower School are now putting the finishing touches to their performance, before their performances to a live audience. The air of anticipation is really exciting! Can I please remind you that ticket allocation is strictly limited to 100 people per audience.

The Lower School morning performance at 9:30a.m. generally has a few more spaces, but babies and toddlers can still be a distraction so please try to avoid bringing them if at all possible. I'm sure that there will be standing room only by the start times and, if you arrive late, you will need to come in by the rear hall entrance. **You must bring your ticket with you to the performance to gain entry.** We're very excited and I'm sure that you will enjoy the shows. After each performance we will be taking a retiring collection in aid of the children's chosen charity – **Challenging MND.**

I hope you will be able to be generous in your donations and support this very worthy charity.



PTA Logo Winner

Over half term the PTA asked the children to design a logo to use on publicity material. There were **50** fantastic entries and, after much deliberation, we are pleased to announce the winning design came from Sophie Gale (6P). We are really excited to be able to use her fantastic logo across all our branded media going forward. Here it is!



All of the entries were wonderful, but special mention must go to Rithika (5S), Thomas (5B), Lottie (5B), Erin (6CG), Imogen (6CG), Ruby (5S), Jackson (6CG) and Connor (6CG) for making the decision very difficult. Thank you for your ongoing support.

PTA Children's Christmas Bazaar

The PTA are delighted to confirm that the December festivities are continuing with the annual children's shopping morning on **Thursday 2nd December!** The shopping morning is a fantastic opportunity for the children to browse and shop independently for their loved ones, with a wide selection of well-priced gifts available. The children will experience a decorated hall, Christmas music, and will be able to put their maths skills to practical use!

We ask that you please provide your children with a named carrier bag, and up to **£10** in change for this event. Thank you!

FA Play Safe – A New National Safeguarding Campaign

Over the weekend, the Football Association and the NSPCC launched 'Play Safe', a national campaign to focus attention on the vital importance of safeguarding in football.

At the heart of the campaign are three short films to emphasise the importance of safeguarding for key groups of people, crucially children themselves.

One aspect of the campaign is prompting parents to ask questions:

- Do you know your child's club Welfare Officer?
- If so, do you have their telephone number in your phone?
- Are you up to speed with your child's club's safeguarding policies and procedures?
- Do you regularly check-in with your child to see what they are enjoying/not enjoying and why?

More information can be found here: <https://www.thefa.com/PlaySafe>



FOR ALL

In partnership with

NSPCC



Attendance Policy

I would like to take the opportunity to draw your attention to our Attendance Policy. The Governing Body have formally adopted an Attendance Policy which can be viewed and accessed via the school website. (www.stthomasjnr.org) Follow the 'Information' tab on the homepage and then click on 'School Policies'. The attendance policy clearly sets out how leave of absence requests are dealt with in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. It also explains and highlights how the school deals with punctuality concerns and lateness; children arriving after 9:00a.m. will be marked as late (code L), children arriving after 9:15a.m. will be marked as an unauthorised late (code U). It is vitally important that all children attend school everyday and arrive on time. Poor attendance and lateness does not only impact on individual children but ultimately is detrimental to the whole class as it can be disruptive to learning and progress.

Swimming Lessons

I am pleased to report that the children in 4W, 4P and 4A continue to enjoy their weekly swimming lessons at St Helen's pool delivered by our fantastic team of swimming teachers. Swimming forms a crucial part of the statutory national curriculum for Key Stage 2 and it is vitally important that all children participate on a regular basis. Please can I ask that all children have their swimming kit in school on a **FRIDAY**. As a general rule if your child is well enough for school they are well enough to swim!

There are still a few parents of children in Year 4 who have not yet paid for their swimming lessons. Please can I ask that you pay the **£45** via Parent Pay as soon as possible. We would like to receive all outstanding payments by the end of the autumn term.

For parents of children in Year 3 (3S & 3BW) you may wish to get ahead of our reminders in the New Year and pay for your lessons now! Swimming for Year 3 will begin on 18th March 2022 and run until 15th July 2022. The cost is **£45** which I hope you will agree is excellent value for money. Please could we encourage you to make your payment via our online payment system, www.parentpay.com. If you feel you may have difficulty in paying this amount and would like to discuss this confidentially then please arrange to speak with Mrs Lawrence in the School Office. Thank you for your support and understanding in this matter.

Christmas Dinner

The Junior School Christmas dinner will be served on **Thursday 16th December 2021**. I am sure this will be a wonderful festive treat and we are all looking forward to a traditional Christmas meal with crackers - staff and children alike!

Main Course

- Roast Chicken (Vegetarian option – Sage and onion topped Quorn fillet)
- Gluten free pigs in blankets
- Roast potatoes
- Mixed vegetables
- Yorkshire pudding
- Gravy



Dessert

- Christmas shortbread biscuit
- Cheese & crackers

If your child has opted for a school dinner on this day they will receive the Christmas meal. The usual menu for this day will **NOT** apply. If your child normally has a packed lunch but would like the Christmas dinner on this date you will need to arrange for payment via ParentPay and inform the School Office by Friday 10th December.

On Wednesday 15th December 2021 the menu choice will be chicken tikka/vegetable curry.

When we return after Christmas on Wednesday 5th January 2022 the menu will commence with **Week 2** choices.

Sadly it is necessary to remind some parents once again that school dinners must be paid for in advance. We have a number of parents who continually fall in to arrears. The School Office continue to send out a number of reminders each week to parents who are in arrears with their dinner money payments. If you have received one of these please can I ask that you clear this debt as soon as possible. We do not offer credit and meals must be paid for in advance.

Christmas Postbox

I am sure many of your children will soon be busy writing Christmas cards for their friends, teachers and other staff at school. The Christmas postbox will be appearing in school on Monday 6th December 2021. The postbox will be sorted on a daily basis and cards delivered and distributed to your children in their classes. Can I remind you that it is very important to ensure you address the envelopes properly to ensure they reach the right person. Please remember to write the persons full name (Christian & surname) as well as their class, e.g. Bob Smith 3S. Please remember this is an internal delivery postbox only.



Christmas Party Day – Friday 17th December

As in previous years the children will be holding their class parties which will take place on the afternoon of Friday 17th December. This is a great opportunity for the children to celebrate the festive season with their classteacher, other adults and friends. It is also a nice way to unwind at the end of a very busy term! Due to a very busy school diary the parties are taking place on the same day as the school Christmas Eucharists. The children will need to come to school in their normal school uniform but will be allowed to change at lunchtime into their party clothes (non-uniform). Please send your child's change of clothes in a named carrier bag. The children must wear 'sensible' casual clothes that will allow them to take part in the normal school day routines as well as enjoy the special activities in their classes. There is no charge for this event. It goes without saying but normal school rules still apply! We do not allow the children to dye their hair, wear make up or jewellery. Please make sure all clothes are named! The PTA have very kindly given each classteacher £1 per child towards these parties and games – THANK YOU!

Christmas Eucharists

We very much hope you will be able to take the time to celebrate the real meaning of Christmas with us this year. We have two Christmas Eucharists in school on the last day of term (Friday 17th December). There will be a Lower School Eucharist at 9:15a.m. and one for the Upper School at 10:45a.m. The Eucharists, led by Fr Mark, will include a number of Christmas readings, Christmas Carols and performances by the school choir. Please come and join us!



Finally.....

Thank you to all those children, parents and friends of the school who attended our PTA Christmas Shopping Event yesterday evening. The school choir helped get us all in the festive spirit and hopefully you were able to find a few Christmas presents and stocking fillers. Many thanks to the PTA for organising this event.

Thank you for your continued support and I hope we can bring the end of term to a successful conclusion before we all enjoy a well deserved break!

Mr D. Moran
Headteacher