

# ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

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



# NEWSLETTER

10<sup>th</sup> December 2021



At long last we near the conclusion of a busy yet very challenging autumn term. Sadly, COVID-19 restrictions and additional protective control measures continue to impact on our school and personal life, and worryingly the new Omicron variant seems to be another reason to remain cautious. Let us pray we all get the Christmas we so much need and deserve with our family and loved ones.

Next Friday (17<sup>th</sup>) we will come together as a school community in fellowship to celebrate our 'Preparing for Christmas' Eucharists with Fr. Mark in the School Hall. Lower School will hold their service at 9:15a.m. with Upper School starting at 10:45a.m. We do hope many of you will be able to join us in this special act of collective worship.

I would like to take this opportunity, once again, to congratulate all the Lower School children on their wonderful Christmas performance of 'Angels Up High' this week. It was a joy to watch and to witness the amazing individual gifts and talents being showcased. My thanks also goes to all the staff who have worked so hard to ensure the performances were of such a high quality despite the many challenges we have had to contend with. It is hard to convey to you how much time, effort, energy and love go in to these performances from all the staff involved. At a tiring end of term I am proud that their dedication was justly rewarded. Thanks to your generous donations at the end of the Lower School performances we raised **£551.25** towards our chosen charity – Challenging MND.

Next week we look forward to our Upper School Christmas Carol Concert taking place at St Thomas of Canterbury Church. The performances are:

- Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December @ 2:00p.m.
- Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December @ 7:00p.m. **[ADULTS ONLY]**

If you are due to attend this event, please can I ask you to take note of the following reminders and requests:

- You **MUST** bring your ticket to gain entry to the performance. Audience numbers are strictly limited to 200 per performance.
- All audience members are respectfully asked to wear a face covering for the duration of the performance (unless exempt).
- All adult audience members are asked to take a home lateral flow device (LFD) before attending the performance. Ideally this should be on the day you are due to attend.
- Please **do not** attend if you are feeling unwell or show any signs/symptoms of COVID-19. Stay at home to protect our children and school community.
- All audience members must remain seated for the performance. Standing is not permitted.

Despite the many challenges we continue to face in school we are delighted to be able to perform to a live audience. In addition, the Zoom details for the 7:00p.m. evening performance will be shared via Parent Hub on Monday for those who wish to join remotely.

The celebration of Christmas brings much anticipation and joy at this time of year. In school we have been focusing very much on the true meaning of Christmas during our journey through Advent focusing on the qualities of hope, peace, love and joy. I do hope that many of you will be celebrating Christmas and the incarnation of Christ by attending church on Christmas Day. At the end of this newsletter there are further details about services taking place at St. Thomas of Canterbury Church this Christmas.

On behalf of all the staff at St. Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School may I wish you and your families a safe, happy and Christ-filled Christmas and a wonderful start to 2022! I hope you get a chance to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas amongst the festive preparations and rejoice at the birth of Jesus Christ.

## Staffing Update

As we draw the autumn term to a conclusion we also prepare to say goodbye and good luck to **Mrs Joanne Watts** our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).

Mrs Joanne Watts has been at our school since September 2017 and I know has been involved in supporting many of our children and families through our SEND provision. I am sure you will all join me in thanking Mrs Watts for her professionalism and dedication to her role during her time at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School. Mrs Watts has developed and introduced many of the systems we now have in place as well as overseeing the deployment of Teaching Assistants, co-ordination of outside agencies and implementation of intervention strategies. I am sure Mrs Watts will take with her many fond and happy memories as she prepares to move to her new school after the Christmas break.

**Mrs Chloe Moran** will take up the permanent post of SENCo from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 and her working days will be Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

## Attendance

The Department for Education (DfE) and Essex Local Authority is clear on the critical importance of not disrupting the education of children and young people and the Government will prioritise keeping all education and childcare settings open.

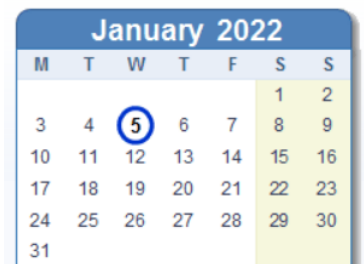
School attendance remains mandatory and all the usual rules continue to apply. Enabling children and young people to attend their education setting regularly continues to be a national priority which is fully supported by St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School. All children must attend school every day and arrive on time. Sickness absence must be reported via the Studybugs app. Leave of absence will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances.

## January 2022 Return

The children return to school for the start of the spring term 2022 on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022**. Please note, Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 is a non-pupil professional development and training day and the school is closed to pupils.

We would strongly recommend that all adults and children continue to complete lateral flow device (LFD) tests over the Christmas holiday period in line with national guidance. This means you should test if you will be in a high-risk situation that day and before visiting people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19.

We would also ask that all children take one LFD test at home either the evening or morning before their return on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022. This will help reduce transmission after a period of mixing over the Christmas holidays.



January 2022						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## REMINDER: Christmas Party Day – Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December

The children will be holding their class parties which will take place on the afternoon of Friday 17<sup>th</sup> 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.** The PTA have very kindly given each classteacher £1 per child towards these parties and games – THANK YOU!



## St Thomas of Canterbury Church – Advent & Christmas 2021

Fr. Mark warmly invites you and your family to celebrate Advent and Christmas at St Thomas of Canterbury Church. Over the Christmas period there are a number of services taking place at St. Thomas'. Please take a look at the church website for further details – [www.st-thomas.org.uk](http://www.st-thomas.org.uk) or telephone 01277 201094.

These include:

- **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December** (Advent 4) - 8:00a.m. Mass
  - 10:00a.m. Sung Mass
  - 6:00p.m. Nine Lessons and Carols
- **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Eve**
  - 4:00p.m. Christingle Service for younger children
  - 6:00p.m. Christingle Service for older children
  - 11:30p.m. Midnight Mass
- **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Day**
  - 8:00a.m. Mass
  - 10:00a.m. Sung Mass
- **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> December – Holy Family Sunday**
  - 10:00a.m. Mass with Carols



## Leave It To Us!

Over the course of this half term we have seen a growing number of examples where events that had taken place in school were then followed up by parents who tried to deal with it further themselves. In some cases this has included approaching children directly. In the majority of cases this then made the situation far worse. Please can I ask you to trust the school and our very dedicated staff in dealing with such issues in an efficient and professional manner. Whenever incidences occur in school we take a great deal of time and effort to assess the whole situation, gather all views and opinions and make a fair judgement based on verifiable facts rather than conjecture. It is important to remember that the version of events you may get told by your child is likely to be one-sided and very often the real facts get sensationalised or mis-reported. I have every confidence in all the staff in dealing with issues in line with our agreed policy. Thank you for your anticipated support.



## Finally....

On Monday morning the children will be enjoying the Hurricane Productions pantomime of 'Aladdin' in the school hall.

**Christmas Jumpers** - On Thursday we are all looking forward to tucking in to our school Christmas dinner prepared by our wonderful Catering Team. To get us all in the festive mood we are asking the children and staff to wear their Christmas jumpers! Children should still wear school uniform on their bottom half, including school shoes.

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

Wishing you all a safe and happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

**Mr D. Moran**  
Headteacher

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