

# ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

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



## NEWSLETTER

21<sup>st</sup> January 2022

I am sure, like me, you were somewhat surprised and slightly annoyed by the appearance of major roadworks and temporary traffic lights at the start of the week. Not what you want on a Monday morning! We had received no prior warning of this work and I know that many staff, parents and children had challenging journeys to school involving a number of detours and diversions – well done to all those who made it on time. Thankfully they had all disappeared by Wednesday afternoon and normality seems to have returned.

You will have seen the announcements this week of the Government plans to move away from Plan B and revert to Plan A in the ongoing battle with COVID-19. For schools there is little difference with the main one being around the wearing of face coverings. From Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors in communal areas. Also from 27<sup>th</sup> January, staff and pupils should follow [wider advice on face coverings](#) outside of school, including on transport to and from school.

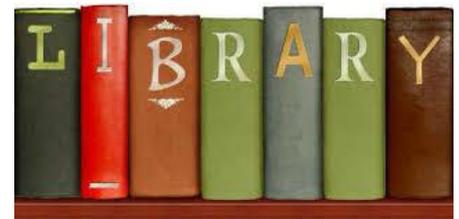
Thank you for your continued support at this challenging time but there does appear to be light at the end of the tunnel and I hope we can continue to work collaboratively together for the good of all the children and families in our school community.

### There is a Buzz in the Library!

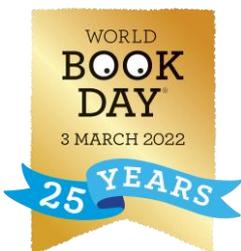
I hope you are all aware of the St Thomas' Reading Tree Challenge which was launched earlier this term (please refer to the Parent Hub message sent on 5<sup>th</sup> January). The new books have now arrived and we have some brilliant new titles which will no doubt inspire your children to become avid readers. Every time I pass the library I am delighted to see it full of children excitedly choosing their next book! I would like to thank the members of our PTA who helped us scan these new titles on to our Junior Librarian system.

Today we were able to award our first set of Bronze Award certificates. This is for achieving reading 5 books across 3 different branches of the tree. I am sure in the week's to come there will be many more awards with children targeting the Platinum Award.

All children have a St Thomas' Reading Tree template which has eight genre branches. For every book read from the library, they will receive a leaf sticker to add to their tree. The library is open on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday lunchtimes for the children to change their books and the school librarian, Mrs Coughtrey and the Upper School Librarians are on hand to help and assist. Please do encourage your child to participate and we look forward to giving out more awards over the course of this term.



### PTA World Book Day Costume Sale



World Book Day is on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 and the children are encouraged to dress up for school as a character from a book – no school uniform on this day! This year, the PTA would like to make available to parents a selection of pre-loved costumes, which can then be sold to the school community, saving you money and helping the environment.

To do this, the PTA need your help!

**How can I help?** Donations of pre-loved fancy dress costumes would be warmly received by the PTA, in our pre-loved uniform box (just by the entrance to the playground).

**What can I donate?** Any costume in reasonable condition, homemade or shop bought would be welcome. If you want to include the book it features in, that would be amazing, but not essential.

**When can I donate?** Any time! The pre-loved uniform box is accessible at drop-off and pick-up. We'd love to get all donations in by Friday 4<sup>th</sup> February, to give us time to sort through.

**When can I buy a pre-loved costume?** On **Wednesday 9th February** at **3.15p.m.** in the school playground. We will also be selling pre-loved uniform, books and doughnuts!

Thank you for your support.

## Holocaust Memorial Day 2022

Holocaust Memorial Day is commemorated on 27<sup>th</sup> January each year. Since January 2016, St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School has been proud to support and commemorate this event along with other local schools through our connection with CFI (Christian Friends of Israel). In previous years this has involved visiting an exhibition, listening to guest speakers and welcoming volunteers from the Jewish community who, in 2020, set up and delivered a very informative and moving session on the Holocaust in our school hall. Sadly, this year these face-to-face sessions are still unable to go ahead in school with many commemorations taking place online.

However, there will be an 'in person' event held on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2022 from 6:30p.m. – 8:00p.m. at Brentwood County High School, Seven Arches Road, Brentwood, CM14 4JF. The theme for this evening is 'Standing for Truth, Bringing Hope'. The evening will include a lighting of candles in memory of the six million victims of the Nazi Holocaust. Admission is free with a retiring collection during the evening. Light refreshments are also available following the meeting.

## Absence Reporting via Studybugs

We are delighted that 417 parents/carers are registered with Studybugs and frequently using this facility to report absence and sickness related absence. The Studybugs system aims to support you and help us as a school keep a close eye on absence trends and monitor children who have irregular school attendance and are in danger of being identified as 'persistent absentees'. Please remember that all absence must be reported via Studybugs and below are just a few reasons why:

### Why use Studybugs?

- **Helps safeguard your child** by automating schools' processing of sick reports, so if any children are unaccounted for, they'll know right away. Also verifies that reports of your child's absence have really come from you.
- **Saves you time** – it takes seconds to give the school all they need, and know they've got the message even if you're reporting at 6am or 11pm the night before.
- **Guides you** with official guidance from Public Health England on the need to stay off school, based on the symptoms or illnesses you enter. Note: Studybugs does not provide medical advice or diagnosis – please consult your GP for this.
- **Shows you what illnesses are going around** – so you can get advance warning and clues as to what your child's illness is.
- **Contributes to public health** by collecting anonymised data on illnesses going around – to help schools, parents and public health organisations take preventative action as early as possible.
- **Confidential and secure.** Your personal data is kept strictly confidential between you and your child's school. We never share your personal data with third parties. Studybugs is hosted from purpose-built secure facilities and all communications with our apps and website are encrypted.

We ask that all parents get the free Studybugs app, or register on the Studybugs website, and use it to tell us whenever your child's ill and unable to attend school. Get the app or register now (<https://studybugs.com/about/parents>)

**PLEASE NOTE:** When recording absences via Studybugs please ensure you are using the JUNIOR SCHOOL app and not the Infant School one. Often we have children reported to the wrong school which can become confusing!

## Finally....

In normal times this Sunday (23<sup>rd</sup>) January would have seen the school and church community coming together at St Thomas of Canterbury Church to celebrate Education Sunday. Given the current situation and related restrictions we are hoping to hold a service of thanksgiving later in the academic year – look out for further details!

Have a good weekend and stay safe.

**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)