

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

4th February 2022

This week we have been reflecting upon Candlemas, the presentation of Christ in the temple and the words of Simeon. Over the past 2 years all of us may have been in some very dark places. As we deal with the continued pressures caused by the pandemic on our school and family life I am sure many of us have taken comfort from light, a light to defeat the darkness. Simeon, an old man, knew that the Holy Spirit would ensure he saw the Messiah, a light for everyone. I am always moved by Simeon's words in Luke's Gospel;



"Now, Lord, you have kept your promise, and you may let your servant go in peace. With my own eyes I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples: A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel." Luke 2: 29-32

Next Friday, we are celebrating two school Eucharists with Fr. Mark in the school hall. The Upper School Eucharist will take place first at 9:15a.m. followed by the Lower School Eucharist at 10:45a.m. Parents/Carers are invited to attend either or both – we would be delighted if you could join us.

As this half term draws to a close I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your on-going support and trust. I wish you and your family a restful half term holiday and hope you manage to get a good break and find some decent weather. Please remember the children return to school on **Tuesday 22nd February 2022**. The school is closed on Monday 21st February 2022 for staff professional development and training.

Letton Hall October 2022

A letter is being prepared to send home after half term for all children in **Year 4** with initial details and information about the Letton Hall residential trip taking place in October 2022. Please make sure you read this carefully and take note of the key dates and actions if you would like your child to take part in this exciting opportunity once they are in Year 5. We have tried once again to keep the cost of this trip to an absolute minimum but have also had to include the rising costs associated with travel, insurance and accommodation. I do hope we can take as many Year 5 children as possible in October as this activity really helps with team building and getting to know each other and their teachers at the beginning of the academic year. If you have any questions or concerns related to this matter please speak to Mrs Lawrence in the School Office.

Sickness Absence



Over the last few weeks we have seen an increasing number of children who are unwell. This includes children who were clearly quite unwell when they arrived for school and perhaps should not have attended. When we have spoken to parents/carers they have stated that having completed a lateral flow device (LFD) test, which was negative, they have decided to send them to school.

Regular school attendance is very important but clearly if children are unwell they should remain at home. With COVID-19 dominating our lives for so long we need to remember that there are still other childhood and seasonal illnesses that our children are susceptible to. I would also like to remind you that if your child has been sick then they must be absent from school for 48 hours. Thank you for your support in this matter.

World Book Day 2022

I am sure many of you will have noticed from the dates issued back in January that **Thursday 3rd March 2022** is World Book Day 2022. As we have done in previous years we are hoping to be able to celebrate this day by inviting your children to dress up as their favourite historical figure or book character. This is a day devoted to celebrating good books and literature and I hope we can do this in style! I hope many of you have also had time to read the additional letter regarding World Book Day from Mrs Coughtrey which also highlights our author visit on Tuesday 22nd February 2022.

The children will be undertaking lots of book related activities in their classrooms, especially during the afternoon, and to get them in the spirit we are asking them to come to school dressed as one of their favourite historical figures or book characters. The emphasis is once again on simple costumes and you do not need to go to great lengths or vast expense to provide a costume for this day. The children can wear their costumes to school and it would be even better if they could bring a copy of the book from which their character comes. Please bear in mind that the children will be completing normal lessons throughout the day so the costume needs to be practical for school. For the same reason we ask that the children do not wear hair dye or make up. The staff are going to join in with the fun and festivities and I am sure we are all looking forward to seeing what costumes and characters emerge! The children **do not** need to pay anything to dress up and at the end of the day they will come home with their World Book Day voucher which they can exchange at a local book shop for one of the World Book Day special titles or money off a full-priced book.



Don't forget that the PTA are also holding a pre-loved World Book Day costume sale next week on **Wednesday 9th February 2022** on the school playground. You'll also be able to pick up a doughnut or two!!

Year 3 Swimming



Lessons for the children in Year 3 (3BW & 3S) begin on **Friday 18th March 2022**. I would like to remind parents that we very much rely on your payments to cover the cost of swimming lessons of **£45 per child**. In recent years we have seen the cost of pool hire rise at St. Helen's as well as the cost of swimming teachers increasing. I hope you will agree that this remains excellent value for money. If there are reasons why your child cannot take part in swimming lessons this must be discussed with your child's classteacher or the School Office. Please ensure your child has the correct swimming kit in school on Friday's. Please could we encourage you to make a prompt 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.

May I remind you that all children have to wear a suitable costume for swimming (no beach wear!) and a swimming hat. Swimming hats are available via ParentPay at a cost of **£3.50**. It is a really good idea to write your child's name on their hat in large letters in a thick permanent marker as this helps the swimming teachers to call their names and also reduces the risk of it becoming lost.

Finally, we desperately need help walking the children to and from the swimming pool on a Friday afternoon. If you have a recent DBS clearance which has been undertaken by the Infant/Junior School and would like to volunteer please contact your child's classteacher.

Letters will be sent after half term to identified children in Upper School (Year 5 & 6) with information and details about 'catch-up' swimming lessons. Please ensure you respond to this letter promptly and arrange for any payment to be made via ParentPay as soon as possible.

Finally....

Congratulations to all those children in Lower School that took part in the Shenfield High School, School Games Football Competition on Tuesday. There were excellent team performances from all involved with our girls' team finishing in **2nd place!!**

I was also delighted to be able to award further Reading Awards in collective worship this morning. More children have now achieved their Bronze Award (reading 5 books across 3 different branches of the reading tree) and we also had our first Silver Award (reading 10 books across 5 different branches of the reading tree).

We were delighted to welcome Mr Joe Tobin to collective worship this morning. Mr Tobin, Director of Music at St Thomas of Canterbury Church, put the children and staff through their paces with a range of music and singing. He was very impressed with the talent on display and is hopeful that some of our children will decide to develop their musical talent further by joining the Church Choir. If your child is interested in exploring this opportunity further then please contact the Director of Music on 07541905287 or joetobin@ntlworld.com

I wish you all a wonderful weekend – see you on Monday!

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