

# ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

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



# NEWSLETTER

4<sup>th</sup> March 2022



It has been a difficult week. Watching world events unfold before us brings back that unsettled feeling, the fear of the unknown and the big question of 'What now?' that we have got so used to over the past two years. The sense of turmoil and unrest is incredibly unsettling, and I know many of you as parents will be working carefully and compassionately to support your children through current global events as they hear and take on board different messages from home, family, friends, and the news.

During our collective worship together on Monday morning we reflected on the events unfolding in Ukraine and offered to God our prayers for peace, justice and reconciliation. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York and Pope Francis have asked us during Lent to pray for peace in Ukraine. If possible, I would encourage you to join in prayer as we seek God's kingdom of righteousness and peace together. The following prayer may be useful:

## A Prayer for Ukraine

*God of peace and justice,  
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.  
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.  
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,  
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.  
We pray for those with power over war or peace,  
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.  
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,  
that you would hold and protect them.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.*



## **Amen**

On Wednesday we entered the season of Lent, a time for all Christians to take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord. We were delighted to welcome Fr. Matthew in to school on Ash Wednesday who led a class-based Eucharist in 4W followed by the imposition of ashes to those children and adults who wished to be 'ashed'.

To run alongside the season of Lent, we have also shared with the children the idea of **40acts**. 40acts is a daily generosity challenge that runs throughout the period of Lent, created by the charity Stewardship. Whether you are intending to give up chocolate, fast food, or playing online games, 40acts encourages you to do something generous during Lent too – it doesn't always have to be about giving something up, you can also take something on! The children were all given a grid of 40 suggested activities and acts of generosity which hopefully they have brought home or have tucked in their homework diaries. Please do take some time to look at this together and see how many you can do. Good luck!

## **Staffing Update**

After 23 years of loyal and dedicated service to St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School **Mrs Carol Carvell** has decided it is time to step down from her position in the school office and has announced her retirement for the end of the academic year. Mrs Carvell will be very well known by many, often being the reassuring voice on the end of the telephone or the friendly face at the reception hatch window! Mrs Carvell is part of a wonderful partnership alongside Mrs Lawrence and I know many parents, both past and present, will have benefited greatly from her wisdom, advice, sympathy and listening ear. She has not just been a fantastic finance and administrative staff member but has also taken on numerous other roles – the list is endless! I am certain you will all join me in wishing Mrs Carvell continued good health and happiness as she prepares for this exciting new stage in her life. We all hope she enjoys a well-

deserved retirement and an opportunity to spend time with her family and friends. Mrs Carvell tells me she is looking forward to booking a term time holiday!

I am delighted to share with you the wonderful news that **Mrs Sophie Antrobus** has informed us that she is pregnant and expecting her second child in early September. This is wonderful and exciting news and I am sure you will join me in congratulating Mrs Antrobus and her husband on this announcement. Mrs Antrobus intends to work up until the end of the current academic year and we will start the process of finding maternity cover for her classteacher role in school ready for September 2022.

Finally, I am also delighted to share the news with you that **Miss Elizabeth Berner** has become engaged to be married. Miss Berner returned from our half term break having been proposed to whilst on holiday in Barcelona! I am sure you will all join me in congratulating Miss Berner and her fiancée (Richard) as they take this exciting next step in their relationship and start planning for a wedding in the future. It is a joy to have such uplifting news to share at this time and I am sure you will all pray for God's blessing on their future plans.

## School Uniform – Reminder!



I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents that after the Easter break all children must be wearing summer uniform as set out in the school prospectus. The Governing Body continue to uphold high expectations by regularly reviewing and tightening up the uniform policy and we would request that all parents adhere to this. From the beginning of the summer term all children must wear summer uniform as set out in the school prospectus and homework diaries.

**All** girls in Year 3 & 4 must wear the green checked gingham dresses as part of regulation summer uniform. Girls in Year 5 & 6 may choose to wear either the green checked gingham dresses or a white school polo shirt with logo with a grey skirt.

Boys need a white school polo shirt with logo and shorts or trousers – also in grey.

Shoes need to be sensible black leather shoes (not boots) with soft soles or leather sandals (black or brown). Black trainers are not permitted. We do not like lights or toys in the shoes so please bear this in mind when you are purchasing any new shoes, especially from Clarks. Incorrect or inappropriate uniform will be flagged up in the new term by putting a gentle reminder sticker in your child's homework diary. Please help support us in achieving greater consistency, smarter presentation and a sense of pride – thank you.



A reminder - jewellery can cause problems in school due to Health & Safety requirements. Children may wear an inexpensive named analogue or digital watch to school providing it is not too big or colourful and they will not be distracted by wearing it. Smart watches are not permitted in school. Smart watches can cause issues with data protection and data security if these devices are trying to access our school Wi-Fi or have the ability to record and/or capture video or audio. No bracelets, rings or necklaces are permitted.

## Red Nose Day/PTA Donation Day – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022

For those of you looking ahead at the dates in the school diary you will have seen that Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022 has become a busy day! There will now be two events taking place across the course of this day.

Firstly, the PTA have asked to hold a chocolate donation day in order to support their Easter Raffle – there will be some amazing chocolate hampers and Easter eggs to be won. On this day the children may wear non-school uniform in exchange for a donation of chocolate suitable for the Easter raffle. Donations of Easter chocolate can be dropped off at school in the morning (no eating it on the way to school!) and some of the donations will also be shared with the local foodbank, for our local community to benefit from. I do hope you will be able to support this event.

Also taking place on this day is the Red Nose Day events. Across the course of the day the children will be working together to complete various sponsored challenges – details will be shared via Parent Hub next week. We would ask, if possible, that every child makes a donation of **£1** for wearing non-school uniform, if possible red clothing would be great! In order to pay your non-school uniform donation and your sponsor money we have set up our own school's special Red Nose Parent Pay page. The link to this will be shared in our fundraising sponsor form next week.

I do hope that as many children as possible can support these two very worthy causes and help raise money for Red Nose Day charities as well as our own PTA. Thank you for your continued support.

## Essex Year of Reading

You will all be aware of how as a school we actively and openly promote the love of reading – there is nothing better than a good book! Earlier this term Mrs Coughtrey launched our St Thomas' Reading Tree Challenge and it has been wonderful to see an increasing number of children achieving their bronze and silver awards as they work their way through the various genres on offer. Keep up the hard work!



Our reading challenge also coincides with the Essex County Council campaign – ‘Essex Year of Reading’. This was officially launched on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022. The campaign includes a programme of fun activities and events that will run throughout the rest of this year. The aim of which will be to help families discover the joy of reading.

The campaign is also intended to support pupils whose education has been affected by COVID-19. We know that many young people have concerns about the impact of the pandemic on their future. Reading on a regular basis can support children and young people now and later in their lives. This includes how they can access further education and their future career.

Essex County Council will be making sure that every family is able to access books and take part in the Essex Year of Reading. Opportunities to get involved in the campaign will be available across Essex. This includes writing workshops, activities for younger children and author visits. Leading broadcaster and children’s author, Dermot O’Leary, will be heading back to Colchester this month to kick off the first of these. St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School will be joining this event via Zoom.

Support will also be available for the wider community to get involved. There will be increasing access to books and resources for adults of all ages during the campaign. We want to remove any barriers for people looking to improve their reading skills.

Essex  
Year of  
Reading

An app (see icon) is now available for the campaign. This includes a library for children and young people, as well as guides for parents and carers. There will also be fun activities, plus writing and poetry competitions. Please do get involved!

## Parents’ Evening

Hopefully from the dates shared with you back in January you will have noted that Parents’ Evening will be taking place on **Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March** and **Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022** – 4:00 – 7:30p.m.

Further details will be shared next week and how this will be organised for the spring term meetings. We will continue to use the SchoolCloud system as a booking portal and are currently looking to offer a hybrid meeting option – meaning you will have the option to attend remotely or face-to-face. We appreciate that many parents found attending remotely more convenient and eased the pressure of travelling and childcare whilst others are keen to get back to in-person meetings. Hopefully the hybrid option will suit everyone’s requirements. Please look out for this letter with booking details and SchoolCloud Parent Guide.

**NOTE:** If you have recently changed or updated your email address please inform the school office as soon as possible as the email address you book with and the one we hold on our MIS system must match. This is for security and safeguarding reasons.

## Finally....

Thank you for supporting our World Book Day event yesterday – the children and staff all looked amazing and I hope you will all make good use of your World Book Day vouchers!

If you have picked up your Doughies pizza and/or cookie bags today from the PTA then I hope you enjoy the process of making and eating them this evening!

Have a wonderful weekend!

**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)