

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

9th September 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am certain that as a school community we are all devastated by the news we heard yesterday evening from Balmoral. The sad death of Her Majesty The Queen is a huge shock to the nation and to the world. Queen Elizabeth II was the rock on which modern Britain was built. For the vast majority of us all we have only ever known our Queen, a constant in an ever changing world. Someone who we respected, had great admiration for and who showed great affection for our nation. Many of you will have been watching the media coverage and the touching tributes that have come in from all over the world.

It is a time of great loss, but Queen Elizabeth II leaves a great legacy. Now the Crown passes to our new monarch, our new head of state: His Majesty King Charles III. We offer him our loyalty and devotion just as his mother devoted so much to so many for so long. And with the passing of the second Elizabethan age, we usher in a new era in the magnificent history of our great country, by saying the words...

God save the King.

A prayer on the death of Her Majesty The Queen

Gracious God, we give thanks
for the life of your servant Queen Elizabeth,
for her faith and her dedication to duty.
Bless our nation as we mourn her death
and may her example continue to inspire us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen



Despite the sad news, it was wonderful to welcome you all back to school this week after what I hope was a fantastic summer holiday (although I am sure it may now be a dim and distant memory!). Although we may all feel a little apprehensive about returning to school and getting up early once again it doesn't take too long to get back into the normal routines. Even our new Year 3 children have settled very quickly and already look very much at home in the Junior School! We have now completed our first week in school and it is a joy and delight to see our school building full of children with the sound of excitement and laughter permeating throughout the building. Once again, the children have demonstrated such confidence and resilience as they return after the summer holiday.

On Monday morning I was delighted to lead our collective worship session in the hall as we got the new school year underway. It is always such a privilege to look out at over 300 smiling faces! During worship we discussed our aspirations for this new year and the personal challenges and targets we aim to achieve. I shared the following quote with the adults and children:

"Think only the best, work only for the best and expect only the best."

Today we were delighted to welcome Fr. Mark who leads collective worship every Friday morning. We are very appreciative that both Fr. Mark and Fr. Matthew continue to support our collective worship together. In addition to leading collective worship every Friday Fr. Mark and Fr. Matthew will also be leading class-based Eucharists this term. This involves a short Eucharist service in the classroom with each class on a rolling weekly rota. It is a wonderful opportunity to see the Eucharist up close and a very intimate act of worship and thanksgiving.

Please do take the time to read the rest of this newsletter as it contains important information about the term ahead – thank you!

Congratulations!

During collective worship on Monday I had great pleasure in presenting badges to those children in Year 6 who have been chosen to take on positions of responsibility this year as House Captains, Sports Captains and Music Captains. I am sure you will join me in congratulating these children on achieving these prestigious positions in school and we look forward to seeing them developing in these roles and being outstanding role models for St. Thomas'.

The Year 6 children chosen were:

HOUSE CAPTAINS

Canterbury- Connor Gowers & Imogen Forbes-Buckingham

Chester- Jacob Shaw & Gabby Wright

Lincoln- Reuben Howard & Connie Pallett

York- Michael Bradshaw & Lois Peters

SPORTS CAPTAINS

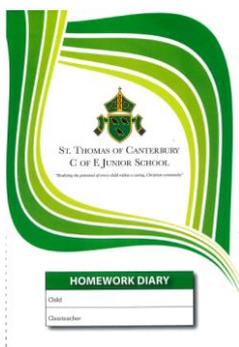
George Lawrence & Anna Bennis

MUSIC CAPTAINS

Isobel Nunn & Ava Shorter



Homework Diaries



I hope by now you have had a chance to look through your child's Homework Diary which have, once again, been kindly funded and donated by the PTA. You will notice that this year they come in a more compact A5 size which will hopefully make them more manageable and fit into children's school bags more comfortably! One of the many aims of the Homework Diary is to communicate with you our vision for education whilst your child is at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School. Our vision offers a framework for education based around Character Education and promoting wisdom, hope, community and dignity – it also offers rigour and academic excellence whilst providing an environment where young people know that they are not just valued for the results they get but for the people they become.

The Homework Diaries are invaluable in promoting and sharing information about your child's progress and conduct in school and also a good way for you to be able to quickly and easily communicate with the classteacher. If you do write a message in the Homework Diary for your child's classteacher please make sure your child brings it to their attention so we can respond accordingly. Please take care of them and ensure your child has it with them in school everyday. At this time of year we ask you to ensure you have been through the first few pages with your child and signed the Home School Agreement as well as all the permission slips which will allow your child to play a full and active part in the curriculum. Please try and have all these signed as soon as possible. Next week myself and Mrs Coughtrey will be visiting each classroom to add our signature to demonstrate our partnership for the coming academic year.

One area I would ask you to pay particular attention to is the page headed 'E-safety and Acceptable Use Policy'. We have updated our media parental consent form to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). You will now need to give permission for the following by circling the yes/no option:

- Photographs/Videos – for use within school premises
- Photographs/Videos – for use in school publications
- Photographs/Videos – for use on school website

In some diaries we have situations where parents/carers have signed the consent form but not circled their options. Please can you check you have completed it correctly so we are aware of your permissions related to each area. You can change your mind at any point to the consent given and we would ask you to indicate this in writing so we can update our records.

Staffing Update

I am delighted to be starting the new 2022-2023 academic year with a full contingent of staff in all roles across the school. Our staff continue to demonstrate complete commitment and dedication to providing the best educational experience and outcomes that we can by getting to know you and your children, not just on an academic level but socially and emotionally as well. Our aim is to ***“Realise the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community.”***

Baby Antrobus has arrived! We were delighted to hear the news at the end of the summer holiday of the birth of Edith Antrobus on 24th August 2022 weighing 7lb 5oz. Mother and baby are doing very well and enjoying the time bonding as a new family. I am sure you will join me in congratulating Mrs Antrobus and her husband on the birth of their new daughter. We will be praying for their family and friends at this exciting new phase in their lives.

School Uniform

Thank you for your support with our school uniform policy. Can I remind you that we have a strict school uniform code and children must only wear approved uniform. We have had to remind a number of children about appropriate footwear, jewellery and hair accessories. If you are in any doubt about what is permissible please check your child's homework diary, the school website or speak to your child's classteacher or the School Office. In the same way we will contact you if we are unhappy with your child's school uniform. All children should be wearing **SUMMER** uniform until the October half term.

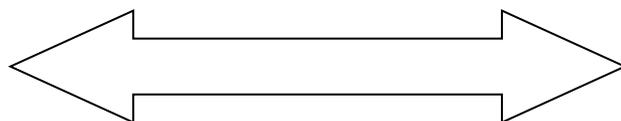


I would also like to remind you that items of clothing with the school logo on can only be purchased from our approved school uniform provider – SmartyPants. We do not allow or authorise any other uniform provider to use our logo as this is in breach of copyright laws. Please do not ask SmartyPants or other uniform providers to logo items of clothing you have purchased elsewhere as this is strictly prohibited. The Governing Body of St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School have unanimously approved this decision and wish to remind you of this situation to avoid upset or disappointment.

Hair Accessories

We continue to notice and have some concerns around the size, style and colour of some hair accessories worn by girls to school. The Homework Diary sets out that *“when hair is long enough, we request it is tied back all the time, using plain green, black or white hair bands and clips.”* Whilst many people adhere to the colours stipulated we have concerns about the size of bows and ribbons worn in the hair. Very often these bows become an unnecessary distraction and cause problems in the classroom.

Can I please ask that approved hair accessories are no bigger than 8cm (3 inches). Next week we will be giving children a 'gentle' reminder of what is acceptable.



8cm (3 inches)

We do have a small supply of school approved hair bows (in school colours) available from the School Office. They are **£3 each** and can be purchased directly from the School Office at the end of the school day.

Extra-Curricular Activities/Clubs



We are delighted that extra-curricular clubs will be continuing this term after the summer break. The staff have met this week to finalise the extra curricular activities and clubs which will be on offer this term. It would be a good opportunity to remind you that we do expect the children to show dedication and commitment to the clubs they attend through regular attendance and participation. We appreciate that in the first two weeks they may be trying them out but after this we expect them to make a firm and decisive decision about their attendance.

Next week we will issue a special 'Clubs Edition' of this newsletter with more detail and information. We are hoping to start extra-curricular clubs and activities in the week beginning **19th September 2022**.

Lower School Swimming



Swimming lessons for 4DW, 4P & 4B begin next Friday (16th September) and 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 represents 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.

I would like to remind you that swimming forms part of the National Curriculum for PE at Key Stage 2 and is not optional. Please ensure your child has the correct swimming kit in school on Fridays. 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 from the school office for £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.

Parent Prayer Group Meeting

Another way in which we celebrate our Church School Christian distinctiveness and look to offer fellowship as a school community is through our weekly Prayer Group meeting. This group meets every Wednesday morning at 9:00a.m. in the Junior School library to pray for the life and work of the school, the wider community and also to spend some time in personal prayer and quiet reflection. In previous years we have had a modest but very dedicated group that meet to offer our weekly thoughts and prayers. If you would like to join us each week or just drop in when you are free we would be very pleased to welcome you to this group. It is a relaxed, friendly, informal group and no one is asked to pray or read aloud unless they wish to. For those that attend they find it an uplifting and refreshing part of the week and solid friendships have been formed over the years. I do hope you will be able to join us next week.

PTA AGM



At this time of year the PTA constitution states we are obliged to hold their AGM to elect committee members for the academic year as well as encourage new members to join. It really doesn't matter how much or how little you can help – all are welcome!

The **PTA AGM** will be held on **Friday 16th September 2022 at 2:30p.m.** in the school hall. Hopefully many of you will be able to pop along just before school pick up time to find out a bit more about the work of the PTA and perhaps get involved. I do hope more people will try and get involved this year and help assist with the popular events which

are run across the course of the academic year. Events include the Christmas Bazaar, Mothering Sunday Sale, quiz nights, school discos and the Summer Fair to name a few.

Please don't be shy in coming forward and speaking to a member of the PTA! By attending the AGM you are not committing to anything so please don't not come through fear of being volunteered or roped in. Your attendance at the AGM could be support in itself!

One of the first exciting PTA events planned for this month is the very popular **Inflatables Afternoon** which is scheduled to take place on Friday 23rd September 2022 (3:30-5:30p.m.) Look out for further details via the PTA – tickets will go on sale next week!

School Photographer

We have arranged for our school photographer to visit the Junior School next week. Kittle Photographic will be in school next Tuesday 13th September 2022 to take individual photographs. This is a wonderful opportunity to capture your child at the beginning of the new academic year looking smart and happy in their school uniform. The children will be taken to the school hall throughout the morning in their new classes to have their pictures taken.

Many parents prefer for their children to wear their winter uniform on this occasion (shirt & tie) although wearing our current summer uniform is perfectly acceptable. If you choose for your child to wear their winter uniform then it must be worn on this day only. Summer uniform remains in place until the October half term.

I do hope your child will be able to look smart and presentable and bring their best smile!

Absence When Recovering From Diarrhoea or Vomiting

We are very mindful that at all times of the year and especially as we move in to the autumn and winter months children will experience periods of illness and sickness. At the beginning of a new academic year I would like to remind you of the advice that we follow from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) regarding their guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings. The guidance is in place to protect the school's pupils and staff and reduce the risk of acquiring an infection at school. The guidance from the UKHSA in such situations is to request that the pupil does not attend school until completely symptom free for **48 hours**.

Studybugs

As we begin this new academic year we continue to promote the use of Studybugs, a more efficient and secure system for reporting your child's absence due to illness. Many parents have already downloaded the app and I would encourage all parents (especially those new in Year 3) to do so as soon as possible even if you don't think you will use it! You can also report absence via your laptop or PC from <https://studybugs.com>

All absence due to illness must now be reported via Studybugs and School Office staff will remind you of this if you ring up to leave a message. This new system helps us track sickness related illness more closely and also provides you with reassurance, advice and guidance from the UKHSA. Thank you for your support.

Harvest Collection and Eucharist

Our Harvest Eucharist will take place on **Friday 30th September 2022 at 9:30a.m.** I hope many of you will be able to join us. The Harvest Eucharist will take place at St Thomas of Canterbury Church. We will be walking ALL the children, accompanied by staff, to St Thomas' Church. It is also very helpful if some parents are available and willing to help escort the classes to/from the church. If you are able to help, then please contact your child's classteacher either through the homework diary or by calling the School Office.

Once again our Harvest collection of gifts will be to support the **Brentwood Foodbank**. 13 million people live below the poverty line in the UK. Every day people in the UK go hungry for reasons ranging from redundancy to receiving an unexpected bill on a low income. Trussell Trust foodbanks provide a minimum of three days emergency food and support to people experiencing crisis in the UK.

We will send out details of the items we will be collecting for the Brentwood Foodbank over the next couple of weeks.

Year 6 Secondary School Applications – OPENS ON MONDAY!

If your child is in Year 6, you can apply for a secondary school (Year 7) place between **12th September 2022** and **31st October 2022**.

Before you apply you should:

- check you live in the [Essex administrative area](#)
- read the secondary school admissions booklet

You may also want to check [the priority admission catchment area schools](#).

Online applications can be made from 12th September 2022 up to and including the 31st October 2022. Please ensure that your online application is submitted by 31st October 2022. Remember to re-submit after making any changes before the deadline.

All applications received after 31st October will be treated as late and will only be processed after all on-time applications. You are less likely to get a place at one of your preferred schools if you apply late.

You can get in touch with the School Admissions Team if you have a query about your application or if you are changing address.

Email: admissions@essex.gov.uk

You might also find it useful to watch the following link: <https://youtu.be/Qoa8fio6WKY>

Parent Hub – Year 3



Many of you will be used to receiving important messages, information and newsletters via Parent Hub from your time in the Infant School. At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School we use the same system. However, you will need to add the Junior School to your app settings by selecting our handle which is – **@stthomasjnr**. Detailed guidance notes were contained in your welcome packs

which you received back in July. If you require another copy or need assistance in setting this up on your mobile phone then please contact the School Office staff who will be happy to help. It is advisable to agree to notifications in your settings as this allows you to open attachments and will notify you when a message is delivered.

Healthy Snacks – NO NUTS!

We are proud to be a healthy school and promote healthy lifestyles and diet. We encourage you to send in a healthy snack for your child to eat at morning break. The vast majority of children do bring in a piece of fruit or healthy cereal bar. However we have observed a few children who are not eating a healthy snack! Please can we ask you to support us in this matter and remember that under **no circumstances** should children be bringing in crisps, chocolate, chocolate covered snack bars or sweets. It is also worth pointing out that a number of fruit based snack products marketed in the main supermarkets contain a very high sugar content and are probably not as healthy as you might think! The classteachers will be reminding the children about what constitutes a healthy snack.

Can I also remind you that we have a number of children with severe allergies to nuts so please **do not** send in any snack or packed lunch items that obviously contain nuts. Thank you for your co-operation.



Finally....

Apologies for the length of this first newsletter! There is so much to share and I appreciate that many of you like to receive as much detail and advanced warning as possible. I am very excited at the prospect of the term ahead and the way we can all work together to ensure our school continues to go from strength to strength.

Next week we will confirm some of the events/dates taking place across the course of this autumn term. Our usual 'Dates for the Diary' schedule should prove very useful in helping you prepare and play a full and active part in school life!

Have a great weekend.

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