

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

10th March 2023



Just as we thought spring was making a welcome appearance it seems that winter has decided not to go away and the presence of snow this week has brought joy and misery in equal measure for many of us! I am sure you will join me in thanking Mr Powis (Caretaker) and his premises team for ensuring the school was safe and accessible on Wednesday morning when we woke up to a covering of the white stuff. Since then, although remaining cold, the wet grey weather has done little to lift our spirits and I think we are all looking forward to some spring warmth very soon!

We have become increasingly aware of Junior School children walking through the car park when they arrive for school in the morning. This is happening where parents completing the Infant School 'loop' send their older child/ren through the car park rather than exiting out on to Sawyers Hall Lane and walking to the Junior School pedestrian gate. Children must not walk through the car park under any circumstances as there are still vehicles moving in this area right up until the school day begins. It also means they are travelling the wrong way on the one-way loop going against the direction of parents/carers dropping off for school. Your children's safety is of paramount importance and we need to ensure everyone arrives safely for school each day. Please help us by supporting this request - thank you for your co-operation.

Please do take the time to read the rest of this newsletter as it contains some important information and reminders.

Industrial Action

Next week sees the final two days scheduled for planned industrial action by the National Education Union (NEU). The remaining dates are:

- Wednesday 15th March 2023
- Thursday 16th March 2023

Each school in Essex will be affected differently by the strike action depending on the number of staff who are members of the NEU, the number that decide to strike on the dates above and other issues of absence the school may be experiencing such as staff illness. Each school will undertake a risk assessment to determine what education provision it may be able to make for children on the days the strike will be held.

It is also important to understand that as Executive Headteacher I am able to ask staff in advance who will be taking strike action; however; NEU members do not have to provide this information until the actual day of the strike action, and there are legal limitations on who can be asked to cover for striking colleagues. I am doing everything possible to minimise any disruption to your child's education at this time but if there is high level of staff taking industrial action on any given day, this may not be possible.

At this moment in time having undertaken an initial risk assessment for both Wednesday 15th March & Thursday 16th March 2023 I am expecting both St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Infant and Junior Schools to be **OPEN** as normal on both days.

Many thanks for your support and understanding.

Statutory Notice

On Thursday 9th March 2023 you will have received a Parent Hub message from the school with regard to the publication of the Statutory Notice. The message also included four attached documents as listed below:

Statutory Notice published in respect of St Thomas of Canterbury CE (VA) Infant School and St Thomas of Canterbury CE (VA) Junior School

Arising from a recent public consultation, the governing bodies of St Thomas of Canterbury infant and junior schools have published a Statutory Notice proposing to amalgamate the two schools into an all-through primary school, with effect from 1 September 2023.

- Statutory Notice
- Complete Proposal St Thomas of Canterbury CE (VA) Infant School
- Complete Proposal St Thomas of Canterbury CE (VA) Junior School
- Amalgamation Consultation Response Summary Report

Any person may object to, or make comments on, the proposals by sending them to: Governing Bodies of St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Infant & Junior Schools, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex CM15 9BX.

This closing date for representations will be **6 April 2023**.

Important Information - Term Time Holidays

Improving school attendance is a key priority for all schools across Essex. Where families choose to take a family holiday during term time, this can detrimentally impact a pupil's progress and can prevent them from fulfilling their true academic potential. Our school attendance policy, available via our school website, clearly sets out the process that parents should follow if they wish to apply for leave during term time. Please note that applications should only be made, if you feel that there are exceptional circumstances which mean that the leave cannot be taken during the school holidays. **We would ask all parents to note that, where families choose to go on holiday during term time and the absences are coded as unauthorised, Essex County Council may not issue penalty notices and may instead proceed to prosecution and place the case directly before the Magistrates for their consideration in court.** If found guilty by the Magistrates, parents could face a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

The Pioneers Gardening Club

The school Gardening Club has recently been awarded Level 1 of the Royal Horticultural Society School Gardening Awards. The awards are designed to facilitate schools turning their gardens into a valuable learning resource by working towards achievable goals. We have demonstrated that we understand the benefits of gardening to children, have successfully planned a gardening project looking at the resources that we may need and have a firm understanding of the hazards in the garden. Well done to all involved and we will proudly display our certificate below!



Red Nose Day 2023

Next Friday, 17th March 2023, is Comic Relief Red Nose Day 2023! Across the Infant and Junior Schools we wish to mark this event and help raise money for this very worthy charity.

In the Junior School you will have already received information about our fundraising plans which includes working together to complete various sponsored challenges. We are also asking the children to leave their school uniforms at home and come to school dressed in **RED** and wearing their Comic Relief red noses! We ask that all children participating make a minimum donation of **£1**.

To pay your non-uniform donation and sponsor money and to avoid the children having to bring money in to school we have set up a special Junior School Red Nose Day Parent Pay donation page via the link below:

<https://app.parentpay.com/ParentPayShop/Foc/Default.aspx?shopid=11143>

Please pay your donation for non-uniform and any sponsorship money raised using this link by Friday 24th March. Children may also like to hand in their sponsorship form to their classteacher by then too. The money collected from both schools will be totalled together and I hope we can raise as much as possible. Thank you for your support.



FRIDAY 17 MARCH

Staffing Update

In recent weeks some of you may have spotted Mrs Antrobus in and around school. Mrs Antrobus is currently completing some keeping in touch days ahead of her return from maternity leave. I am delighted to inform you that Mrs Antrobus will be returning to her post and responsibilities in school on Friday 31st March 2023.

This will mean that after the Easter holiday break Mrs Antrobus will take over the Year 5 class currently being taught by Miss Smyth (5SM). Miss Smyth will therefore sadly be leaving us at the end of this term as her maternity cover contract comes to an end. I am sure you will join me in thanking Miss Smyth for her care, dedication and commitment to her class and wish her continued success for the future as she continues her teaching career - she will be sorely missed.

Mrs Antrobus will also be returning to her senior leadership role of Upper School Team Leader. She will take over from Ms Marshall who has taken on this additional responsibility since September 2022. I would like to thank Ms Marshall for her professional approach to this important role and for overseeing the staff and children in Upper School.

Midday Assistant Vacancy - We Need You!!

WE NEED YOU!



We currently have a vacancy for a Midday Assistant (MDA) role in school to assist in the care and welfare of the children during the lunchtime period. The hours are 11:55a.m. – 1:15p.m. Monday to Friday. No previous experience is necessary and training will be provided. Any successful applicants will be subject to pre-employment checks including a DBS disclosure.

If you are interested in this opportunity and becoming part of our fantastic MDA team or would like to find out more information please give your details to the School Office. We will then arrange for an application pack to be sent to you with further details.

Parents' Evening

On Monday you will receive a Parent Hub message with details about booking appointments for Parents' Evening. Spring term Parents' Evening will be taking place on **Wednesday 29th March** and **Thursday 30th March 2023** – 4:00 – 7:00p.m.

The letter and accompanying SchoolCloud guide will explain how to make your appointments online. Please note that the booking window opens at 6:00p.m. on Tuesday 14th March 2023. We will also send you a Parent Hub reminder on Tuesday to alert you to when this booking window goes live.

I do hope that all parents/carers will take this opportunity to meet with your child's classteacher to discuss their progress to date and celebrate the achievements they have made since September 2022. We look forward to seeing you.

Finally....

Many of you will be aware that Mrs Pritchard has been absent from school since the end of January after sustaining a broken ankle. I am delighted that she has made a good recovery from this injury and we are expecting her to return to work next week. I am sure the children in 6P will be delighted to see her!

Good luck to any parents/carers or family friends of the school who are taking part in the Brentwood Half Marathon on Sunday. Even if you are not competing you may like to turn out to cheer on the brave athletes as they complete the course. I hope the weather is kind to you all!

Next week we will be sharing with you the new school dinner menus for the summer term which will begin after the Easter holiday. Please look out for this information and remember to return your menu choices as soon as possible.

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