



# NEWSLETTER

22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023

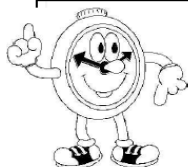


**Nobody likes to be late.** I am sure we have all been in the situation where as adults we have arrived late for a meeting or appointment, or been the person who arrives late for the cinema or theatre. Arriving late is often embarrassing, puts a spotlight on the late arrival and also causes unnecessary disruption to all the other people who have arrived on time. This is exactly the same scenario when your child arrives late for school.

Over the past week we have become increasingly concerned at the number of children arriving late for school. This is particularly evident for our younger children in Reception and Key Stage 1. I fully appreciate that on the odd day there may be a situation beyond your control that contributes to lateness – but this should be the exception to the rule! Children arriving late are often anxious coming in to school and do not experience the positive start to a school day we all desire. It is also disruptive to the rest of the class and classteacher who are settled to their early morning routines and eager to get their learning underway. Please can I ask that all parents/carers respond to this reminder and ensure that **ALL** children arrive to school on time everyday. Punctuality is just as important as attendance and is a good life skill and habit to instil in our children from a very early age. If a child continues to be persistently late then this can lead to a penalty notice from the Local Authority for irregular school attendance. Please support us and more importantly your child with arriving to school on time.

Please also see below for some useful reminders about the impact of poor attendance and punctuality!

## Punctuality - Why does it matter?



When your child arrives late at school, s/he misses the classteacher's instructions and the introduction to the lesson.

Your child may also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late! Being late for school has a huge impact on your child's learning, progress and confidence.

As a parent/ carer you are responsible for ensuring your child is in school

Minutes late per day during the academic year	Equals days worth of teaching lost in a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

Frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning lost and can seriously disadvantage your child.

**School begins at 8:55a.m.**

Please help your child to be punctual - **THANK YOU!**



When arriving at the **EYFS and Key Stage 1** entrance each morning it is very important to keep the flow of pedestrian traffic moving to get the children in to school safely and quickly and allow parents/carers to complete the one-way 'loop' and get on with your busy day. For this reason we would ask you to have done your goodbye routines and given your child their book bag/lunchbox...etc. before you get to the second pedestrian gate. This will avoid clogging up the loop and having parents and children backing up on the path. This has improved this week with the majority of children in school and parents off site in 6 minutes...but there is room for further improvement!

If your child is using their scooter to travel to and from school can I also ask that they park their scooter against the fence of the scooter park rather than leave it in the middle of the gravelled area or immediately inside the gate. It is wonderful to see so many children scooting to school but the scooter park is becoming very congested and some children have tripped on abandoned scooters. The scooter park is plenty big enough to accommodate the number of scooters arriving on site – you may just need to walk a little further in order to park safely and responsibly!

I am very aware that the last couple of weeks have seen a mass of information, dates, reminders and letters coming out from school as we settle in to the new academic year. I know at times this can feel a little overwhelming and difficult to keep on top of. I am hoping (fingers crossed!) that from next week the amount of communication between home and school will quieten down as we get in to a 'normal' routine. However, it is very important that we keep you fully informed so if you have yet to join the new Primary School Parent Hub channel...then do so without delay! If you are unsure how to do this or experience difficulty then please do contact the School Office for assistance.

I hope you find this newsletter useful and informative in keeping up to date with the life and work of the school and once again I would like to thank you for your continued prayers and support this term.

## **Congratulations!**

During collective worship on Friday last week 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 of Canterbury Church of England Primary School. Whilst we await the outcome of our mission statement process/survey and decision on new House names, the Houses are designated by colour only at this stage.

The Year 6 children chosen were:

### **HOUSE CAPTAINS**

- RED-** Olive Daw & Harriet Barnes  
**YELLOW-** Jessica Muir & Dylan Rees  
**GREEN-** Charlotte Snow & Harry Sullivan  
**BLUE-** Violet Eldred & Henry Bannister

### **SPORTS CAPTAINS**

**Mia Ballam & Bobby Reynolds**

### **MUSIC CAPTAINS**

**Lila Keith & Melody Shanley**



## **Midday Assistant Vacancy**

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. A copy of the job advert, job description and person specification have also been circulated via Parent Hub if you require additional information. The closing date for applications is **Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023.**

## **MH Ambassadors 2023-2024**

This year we are delighted to be continuing with children's Mental Health Ambassadors in our Primary School with Key Stage 2 children taking on these positions of responsibility. This initiative is being organised and led by Mrs Coughtrey and Mrs Pritchard. This term our new MH Ambassadors are receiving training to become peer mentors, by teaching them strategies to create positive mindsets, which they can share within our whole school community. The MH Ambassador team will meet regularly to develop ways

to disseminate their learning to children and families of St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School. I am sure you will join me in congratulating the following children on their new and exciting role in school:

Frankie Cooney  
Grace Morrell  
Ava Vaughan  
Taylor Wootton  
Sienna Buckle  
Thea Shorter  
George Simpson  
Violet Eldred

Thomas Nunn  
Taylor Demetriou  
Ollie Benns  
Luke O'Leary  
Eliyas Halabi  
Olivia Van Veen  
Evan Garn



## Urgent Reminder – NO NUTS!



This is a repeat reminder from the previous newsletter about the importance of maintaining our school as a nut free environment. This week we have noticed a number of children who have items in their lunchboxes which contain items that potentially could have nut products in them. This has been particularly the case for new children starting in Reception.

We are proud to be a healthy school and promote healthy lifestyles and diet for all our children. Please can we ask you to support us in this matter and remember that under **no circumstances** should children be bringing in food items that contain nuts. We have a number of children across our school 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.

## Staffing Update

I regret to inform you that Mrs Nicola Keys will be leaving St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School with her last day being today. Mrs Keys is one of our dedicated team of Catering Assistants that work tirelessly to ensure our children are provided with healthy, nutritious food every day. Mrs Keys is leaving to pursue a new career path and opportunity and it is with great sadness that we prepare to say goodbye. I am sure you will join me in thanking her for her loyal service and commitment to our school and wish her and her family every good wish and success for the future. We are currently in the process of recruiting a new Catering Assistant to join Mrs Turner (Catering Manager) and her team.

## IMPORTANT - Contact Details



It is vitally important that the school holds all current and up to date contact details for every child on roll in case of needing to contact you in emergencies. Recently it has come to light that some contact details, especially mobile telephone numbers, are out of date or not working. Please can I ask you to make sure that all contact details we hold for you are up to date. If you have recently changed mobile or landline numbers, or moved house we must be informed as soon as possible to ensure we hold the correct details. If you need to inform us of recent changes please put it in writing and email in to the School Office so we can update our system.

The new statutory guidance for schools 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (KCSIE)' came in to force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023. One aspect of safeguarding that is very clear in this document is that schools need to have more available emergency contacts for children. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 says that schools should have at least two emergency contacts for every child in the school in case of emergencies, and in case there are welfare concerns at the home. Thank you for your support in this matter.

For your information our Child Protection Policy has also been updated to reflect the new KCSIE 2023 guidance and this policy and Part 1 of KCSIE can be found on our website.

## Administering Medicines in School

At the beginning of a new academic year we always like to take the opportunity to remind parents/carers of the school policy on administering medicines in school. I would particularly urge ALL parents to take note of this information. The full policy adopted by the Governing Body can be accessed via the school website. You will also find a copy of the 'Administering Medication Form' which can be downloaded, completed and returned to school. Can I please draw your attention to the extract taken from the policy below:

*“St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School can only accept medicines that have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse prescriber or pharmacist prescriber. Medicines should always be provided in the original container as dispensed by a pharmacist and include the prescriber’s instructions for administration. Office staff will seek new up to date contact numbers for all those pupils in need of medicine. We will only guarantee medicine will be given to the most serious of cases – in these cases it is good practice to ask parents and pupils to be involved in reminding the office staff.*

*Medicines will be stored in a secure cabinet during the day or a staffroom fridge where necessary. Parents/Carers should make arrangements to collect the medicine from the school office at the end of the day unless alternative arrangements are made with the school staff. Medicines will not be handed to a child to bring home.”*

It is very important that all parents/carers adhere to these guidelines. We do experience a number of parents who hand in medicines without the original container or instructions for administration. Please help us to implement our policy for the safety of your children and the protection of our staff. The School Office may refuse to accept medicines brought into school.



## Harvest Collection 2023

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.

Brentwood Foodbank is part of the Trussell Trust network of foodbanks and they help local individuals and families in crisis through the provision of emergency food supplies donated by churches, schools, businesses and the general public.

The circumstances surrounding a crisis are unique to every individual, so the foodbank partners with frontline care professionals, such as health visitors, social workers and other community-based support workers, who are able to identify people facing hunger and refer them to the foodbank. As well as receiving nutritionally-balanced 3-day food parcels and other essential products, people are welcomed with a cup of tea, listened to and signposted to agencies that are able to help resolve the underlying causes of their crisis.

Brentwood Foodbank is a collaborative project that seeks to engage with the whole community to tackle food poverty in our local area.

At present the Brentwood Foodbank is struggling and having to buy food on a weekly basis to keep up with demand caused by the cost of living crisis. Your Harvest donation would be immensely valuable in enabling them to provide short-term emergency food to people in crisis in our local community.

The **Brentwood Foodbank urgently** need the following on their 'Harvest Festival Shopping List':

Tinned spaghetti  
Tinned meatballs  
Tinned potatoes  
Tins of soup

Tinned tuna  
Tinned sardines  
Tinned ham

Tinned rice pudding  
Tinned custard

Tinned fruit  
Instant mash packets

Jams & spreads  
Sugar

Cereals  
Tea bags 40 & 80s

Nappies size 4/5/6



I do hope that every child can bring in at least one item on this list. I am sure we are all able to put one or two extra items in to our shopping trolleys and baskets to help those that are less fortunate than us. We will be pleased to accept your donations between now and half term when we will arrange for the items to be delivered to the Brentwood Foodbank. Please send items in to school with your child and they will be collected in their classrooms by their classteachers. Please be mindful of use by/sell by dates and ensure they have a long enough expiry date to be used by the Brentwood Foodbank. Thank you for your support in this matter.



## Contacting Staff

When parents/carers contact members of staff we always try and respond as soon as practically possible. However, please be aware that your message/email may be just one of many that staff are dealing with and responding to. We will always prioritise our communication dealing with the most urgent matters first – this may lead to a slight delay in response time in getting back to you. With a school population now of over 500 children I am sure you can appreciate we are extremely busy!

Some individual members of staff experience a particularly heavy caseload e.g. the Senior Leadership Team, and this can lead to parents/carers not receiving an immediate response. Please do not interpret this as us ignoring you because we will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you for your understanding.

## Finally....

Thank you to all those parents/carers who attended our Year 6 Parents' Information Evening on Wednesday. Once again may I remind all parents of children in **Year 6** that your Secondary School applications need to be completed and returned to the Local Authority by **31<sup>st</sup> October 2023**. Applications can be made online via [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions). 98% of parents in Essex applied online last year. I am sure you all have this in hand and are busy visiting various Secondary Schools at this time.

You might also find it useful to watch the following link: <https://youtu.be/Q0a8fi06WKY>



## REMINDER:

Your child will be offered their free flu vaccine in school next week – Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The flu vaccine will help protect your child against flu and serious complications like bronchitis and pneumonia. Vaccinating your child against flu will also help protect them as well as family vulnerable to the virus, such as babies and the elderly, and your friends too!

Please complete a consent, refusal or call the Immunisation Team on 0300 790 0597 Option 1, if you require further assistance.

Have a lovely weekend!!

**Mr D. Moran**  
Headteacher

**And...** please remember if you have any questions or queries or comments feel free to contact us: [admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk)