



St Mary's CE VC First School

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Newsletter 1 - 2017/18

13th September 2017

Dear Parents

It is a pleasure to welcome you all back as we start a new school year. I hope you all had an enjoyable summer break. The children and staff have returned looking enthused and full of energy!

We are pleased to welcome new families into our reception year and also into other year groups. We hope you all enjoy your time with us. We are also delighted to welcome Mr Mike Williams. Mike will be the Teaching Assistant in Rowan Class working alongside Stuart Galloway. Many of you may have already heard that Emma Middleton has been unable to return to school yet due to being unwell over the summer holidays. Unfortunately, Emma has spent some time in hospital this summer and is recovering at home. Emma is looking forward to returning to Beech Class in a couple of weeks. I am sure that you, along with the staff, will wish Emma a speedy recovery. In Emma's absence Nina Guy has agreed to return to us temporarily to support Mel Laval in Beech Class where needed.

Many of you will be beginning to notice a few changes around the school. The school hall has had a refurbishment including repairs to masonry, redecoration and new lighting. Last summer, we were fortunate to have the new solar panels fitted on the roof of the school. We will now be able to monitor our panels through the new television monitor located near the main office. This has been through a scheme led by the the Dorset Community Energy Scheme. In addition, Tony Draper, our handyman, has been decorating Willow and Oak Classrooms for us during the break.

As this is the beginning of a new academic year I would like to reinforce how much we value the contributions our volunteer helpers make to school life. If you think you could spare some time each week and would like to help around the school please get in touch and let us know. Volunteer helpers often support the children with reading, in the library and in lessons. Please contact me if you would like to find out more and we would be delighted to have you on board.

Thank you to those of you who completed our parent survey sent home during the summer term. The results are available on our website and I will keep you informed of our actions resulting from your responses as the term progresses.

As always I will hope to keep you informed of all school events through a regular newsletter about once a month. They will be numbered so you will know if you have missed one! Additionally the calendar shows events for the school year 2017-18. We hope you find this useful. Both newsletters and calendar can also be found on our website. A paper copy of our annual calendar will be sent home shortly.

As this is the first newsletter of the term there now follows quite a lot more information.

Yours sincerely

School Assemblies

As in previous years we will be offering you the opportunity to attend your child's class assembly. Each class will do two over the year. The class assembly dates for each term are set out on the calendar. We are continuing with our Jigsaw assemblies twice each half-term, exploring social and emotional attitudes to learning. All parents/carers are very welcome to join us for these assemblies too. At the end of each half term a specific class lead the Jigsaw feedback on their learning to the school. These are outlined in our school calendar.

Reception Parents Coffee Morning

If your child joined our school in Reception last week you are invited to join us for a coffee morning on Friday 29th September from 8.45am. The Reception teachers will join us to give you some information about the teaching of early reading and phonics to enable you to support your child at home.

Children's Data

Attached to this newsletter will be the current data we hold on your child (children in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4). We would be very grateful if you could check it, make amendments where appropriate and return it to school as soon as possible as it is very important we hold up to date information.

School Office

For those of you new to our school, our school office is open from 8.30am where Bev Hayes and Jane Dixon are happy to help with queries and questions. Please feel free to call into the office once you have dropped off your child if you need to see Bev or Jane.

Lunchtime Staff

We are currently looking to recruit new lunchtime staff to provide cover for staff illness. The nature of this cover requires the staff member to be available at short notice and on occasions for long periods of time. Please see Jane Dixon, our School Business Manager, if you are interested.

Class Termly Letter with Termly Voluntary Donation Request

Your child's class teacher will shortly be informing you by letter of their classroom arrangements and topics for the term. The teachers are always available if you have any matters you wish to discuss. This is best done with them after school. If it is urgent could it please be done during arrival time (8.30 to 8.45am), and not once school has started. We request voluntary contributions on a termly basis to avoid the possible situation of having several requests each term for such events as school trips and theatre performances. We have found for the past few years this has worked very well. The request for this voluntary contribution will be in the class termly letter and we thank you in anticipation of this support. Please remember we prefer payments to be made via the School Gateway wherever possible. Details of how to access this service are attached for new parents or those of you who have yet to sign up.

Life Education Van

We are looking forward to our annual visit from the 'Life Education Van' on Wednesday 4th and Thursday 5th October. All classes will have an opportunity to visit the mobile classroom on our school site. There will be a parent session which you are welcome to attend in order to find out more about the programmes and learning opportunities. This will be on Wednesday 4th October from 8.45am-9.15am. Please feel free to come along to find out more.

Permission Slip for all Walking Trips During the Year

There are occasions each term when your child's class may leave the school premises to go on a walking trip in the locality or indeed to the church. To avoid the difficulties we experience in trying to ensure permission is granted by the parent/carer of every child (often requiring telephone calls on the morning of a trip) we use the attached permission slip to cover all such trips. These are only for walking locally and parents/carers are still informed prior to going via the children. We hope you feel able to complete and return this slip as in previous years to cover this year. These have already been collected for Reception children.

Harvest

Our Harvest Festival will take place on Thursday 12th October. You will be able to choose which you come along to as it will take place at 9am and be repeated again at 2pm. This is to reduce overcrowding in our school hall. All parents and family members are welcome to join us on this occasion.

School Access

Please can I remind all families to use our pedestrian gate at the front of the school rather than our car park gates when walking in and out of school. It has come to our attention that children are walking across the car park and in and out of the double gates. We would like to teach the children good habits with regard to their safety and thank you in anticipation of your support.

School Bus

We have a new company running our school bus service this term: Barry's Coaches have replaced Damory Coaches. The bus timetable for stops can be viewed on our school website. Please can I ask that you keep us informed of your child's travel arrangements so that we can ensure the smooth running of the bus departure from school at the end of each day. Each morning, 2 members of staff collect the children from the bus and at the end of the day 2 members of staff register the children and ensure they are safely on the bus.

School Nursing Team

We are pleased to welcome Maria Waters as our new School Nurse. Maria will work alongside our Nursery Nurse Karen Caines to support families and children in our school. Please contact Karen Bennett or Bev Hayes if you would like to contact the school nursing team for support. Maria will be in school on Tuesday 26th September from 8.50am-9.50am for a drop-in session. Please feel free to call into our Family Support Room near our main office for a chat if you would like to.

School IT Systems

Some of you will be aware that we have been having many changes to our IT systems during the summer break. Unfortunately this has meant that there are currently some issues with our Schoolcomms messaging and payment system (Gateway). Please contact Bev or Jane if you have any issues and we hope that we will soon be back to normal! Thank you for your patience whilst we resolve the technical problems.

Reception Open-Mornings - September 2018 Intake

I am always pleased to meet with new families and would like to offer parents the opportunity to attend one of our open-mornings this term. These mornings are intended for parents to come along and meet with me, have a tour around the school and join in with our Songs and Praise Collective Worship. If you know someone with a child due to start school in September 2018 please let them know about these dates. They should phone into the school office to let us know they are coming along. The dates are:

- Wednesday 27th September 2017 - 9.30-11.00am
- Wednesday 18th October 2017 - 9.30-11.00am
- Wednesday 15th November 2017 - 9.30-11.00am
- Wednesday 22nd November 2017-9.30-11.00am

Parents use of photos taken in school

Parents will often understandably want to take photographs of activities in school involving their children. Whilst in most instances this will not be a problem it is possible they will, in all innocence, make them available more widely. The popularity of social networking sites means that parents might put photographs from school on to 'Facebook', or something similar. If the photograph only includes their child, then that is entirely up to them. However, if it includes other children (or adults), then this can be a problem. Permission for their images to be used on a website outside school may not have been granted. We do not want to stop parents from taking photographs of their children at school events. However in order for us to have a system of accountability we would be grateful if the slip attached to this newsletter could be returned, regardless of whether you intend to take photographs. I do hope you understand these issues of photography in school and what can happen if they are carelessly passed on. Again, these have already been distributed to Reception children.

Clubs

We are delighted to be able to offer the following clubs this term. All clubs will have a maximum number of children and have to be booked through our school gateway. If your child is new to our school this term in Year groups 1-4 it may be difficult for you to book a club online, please contact Bev if this is the case and she will support you in this.

Club	Year Group(s)	Day/Time	Leader(s)	Start date	End date	Dates
Art and Craft	Years 1 and 2	Mondays 3.00-4.00pm	Laura Pickles	Monday 25 th September	Monday 20 th November	25 Sept 2,9,16 Oct 6,13,20 Nov
Small-World Play	Year 2	Wednesdays 3.00-4.00pm	Lyn Charles	Wednesday 27 th September	Wednesday 22 nd November	27 Sept 4,11 *Oct 1,8,15, 22 Nov
Computing	Year 2	Wednesdays 12.30-1.00pm	Mel Laval	Wednesday 27 th September	Wednesday 22 nd November	27 Sept 4,11,18 Oct 1,8,15,22 Nov
Book Club 'Books for Boys'**	Year 3	Thursday 3.00pm-4.00pm	Suzanne Garner	Thursday 28 th September	Thursday 24 th November	28 Sept 5,12,19 Oct 2,9,16,23 Nov
Gardening	Year 3	Mondays 3.00 - 4.00pm	Julie May	Monday 18 th September	Monday 17 th October	18, 25 Sept, 2, 9, 16 Oct.
Library Monitors ***	Year 4	Wednesdays 3.00 - 4.00pm	Pippa Simpson	Wednesday 27 th September	Wednesday 18 th October	27 Sept 4,11,18 Oct
ICT	Years 3 and 4	Mondays 3.00-4.00pm	Lisa Thornicroft	Monday 25 th September	Monday 21 st November	25 Sept 2,9,16 Oct 6, 13, 20 Nov
Football	Years 3 and 4	Mondays 3.00-4.00pm	Stuart Galloway	Monday 25 th September	Monday 20 th November	25 Sept 2,9, 16 Oct 6,13,20 Nov
Choir	Years 3 and 4	Thursdays 3.00 - 4.00pm	Jane Joy	Thursday 28 th September	Thursday 23 rd November	28 Sept 5,12,19 Oct 2,9,16,23 Nov
Playtime Pal training *****	Year 4	Friday 3.00 - 4.00pm	Kate Brake	Friday 22 nd September	Friday 6 th October	22,29 Sept 6 Oct

*Please note there will be no small-world club on Wednesday 18th October due to Parent Consultation Evenings

** Year 3 Boys only - I will run another for girls later in the year!

***Year 4 children will be invited to apply to Pippa Simpson if they are interested in these roles

**** Year 4 children have already received information about this and signed up if they wished to.

Clubs will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis and

will now be available to book using our School Gateway system. If you require further information on any club please speak with the person running it.

- **Footie4Dorset** is run by Lee Cuff on Wednesdays. All Year 4 pupils have already had information about this. As it is not run by school staff payment is required.