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Newsletter 39

17th July, 2020

Happy Summer! And so, the final newsletter of the year and it is a bumper edition so I'll cut straight to the chase!

PE Kit and Pencil Cases... Our plans for September are underpinned by a detailed risk assessment. One outcome of that risk assessment is that we will be providing every child with their own individual pack of stationery to avoid transmission through sharing equipment. Alongside this, please ensure your child does not bring a pencil case in from home. We may review this in time, but this will be our starting position.

Similarly, we have decided that when getting ready for PE, children will only change their footwear and so will not need to bring a full PE kit into school. However, on Wonderful Wednesdays the children should come to school wearing their PE kit and they will stay in this all day.

Safeguarding over the summer... If over the summer you have any issues related to safeguarding which you would usually have contacted school about, we have a new email address that can be used to share concerns, ask advice or seek support. I will be able to check the emails, and also the BWMAT Trust Safeguarding Lead will be alerted to any email received. The address is safeguarding@ststephens.bwmat.org

Breakfast and After School Care Club... I am delighted to confirm that, following discussion and risk assessment with Mrs Forder and Mrs Goldaniga, we will be opening both Breakfast Club and After School Care Club from Monday 7th September. Booking for Breakfast Club is available via Parentpay still, and we are in the process of setting up After School Club to also take bookings through Parentpay. Although this will hopefully be a more convenient way to book sessions, it won't be ready until the first week of September so thank you in advance for your patience and we will confirm when bookings can be taken.

Dates... By now we would usually have shared with you dates for next year. This year we simply don't know what the guidance regarding Harvest Service, Nativities etc will be and so we will keep you updated as the guidance evolves, and the picture hopefully clears, through the Autumn Term. What we do know however, is that we will have Inset days on Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd September, with the children (all of the children!) returning on Thursday 3rd September.

Year 6 Leavers... Today we visited the church for the third and fourth of four Leaver's Services that we have had this week. Each service, far smaller and more intimate than usual, gave us the chance to share some of the children's memories of their time here, celebrate their achievements and personalities, present them with a bible and candle and wish them well. I am really grateful to Reverend Philip, the Church wardens and the PCC whose support and creativity made this possible and to the school staff who found a way to make it work. Our Year 6s are a kind, creative, joyous bunch who it has been my great pleasure to share our school with over the years and it was lovely to have shared that special time with them this week.

Au Revoir... This week we are also saying au revoir to Mrs Renwick and Mrs Quarrell. Mrs Renwick has been with us for 18 months, teaching in year 2 at first and this year in Reception and she has been a complete delight to have in school. She is a great teacher and a lovely human being and we will miss her greatly as she heads off to a new challenge in Frome.

And speaking of lovely human beings, we have had the pleasure of having Mrs Quarrell in our school since the start of March as a teaching assistant. She cares greatly about the children and is so skilled in her work with them and we are really sad that her time with us has come to an end. We wish Mrs Renwick and Mrs Quarrell lots of love and luck for the future.

And with that, all that remains is for me to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of your messages of support, your resilience and your contribution to our special school community during this peculiar period. Our school family has stretched, adapted, come together and reshaped several times over during this period and running through all of the change and uncertainty has been our core values displayed mostly strongly and consistently by our fantastic children. Every little thing is going to be alright, and as we look ahead to September, it feels alrighter already!

Have a fantastic Summer, Andy Bowman

Love

Courage

Creativity

Joy



Message from the PTFA...

Dear St Stephen's Parents & Carers,

Well what a strange and emotional ride this Coronacoaster has been so far! I'm sure there have been some real highs and lows for you and your family, and that can change within any given hour! And don't get us started on home schooling ... who else hides in the loo for a 'break' and has called INSET day in desperation?! The emotional and financial toll of this period are very real so we hope this newsletter finds you as safe and well as you can be.

I know that we are all a bit frazzled and missing our special school community, and the routine of school. We wanted to contribute to this newsletter because we think it's important for us to look forward because there will be an end to this (or at least a new normal which gets us closer to what we knew and loved as an average day)! It is also good for our mental health to focus on some positives: such as earlier this week receiving the letter from Mr Bowman with the plan to have all our children back to school in September as safely as possible.

We had a great fundraising year (up until lockdown) with all your generous donations and support hosting events such as the School Disco, Christmas Fair, Quiz night, uniform sales and book at bedtime. With all these great events and your contributions, we are closer to the library fund target than we were at the beginning of the school year.

Unfortunately, lockdown hit just before we were due to launch into some key events such as the Summer Fair and a few more cakes sales. These might have helped us reach our library target this year but in the grand scheme of what we are all living through, right now it really doesn't matter. We did not want to continue whole school fundraising during lockdown as we appreciate that you already have huge demands on your time, energy and finances. However, we would like the library and PTFA fundraising for the coming school year to be as great as it can be, so for those of you that may be able to or would like to contribute there are still ways in which you can help:

Continue to raise money *for free* through easyfundraising:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ststephenspribath/?invite=YHM3U5&referral-campaign=s2s>

When you shop at **Amazon Smile** they will also donate to St Stephen's PTFA, at no cost to you – just copy this link and login to your amazon account:

<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1116465-0>

You can also make a direct donation through donate my school:

www.donatemyschool.com/1681 where you can make a one-off donation or sign up for a regular payment.

In the new school year we will make a plan on how we can continue to provide some of the great events the PTFA runs, including the Second Hand Uniform Sale, for the time being we are unable to receive clothes but we would very much appreciate it if you could hold on to any clothes you would like to donate (please remember they must be in good condition) we will arrange a drop off point and times in September, but if you need to offload items before then please contact us directly at pta@ststephens.bwmat.org

Last but by no means least we wanted to say a great big thank you to Rosie and Karensa for all their hard work and support they have given the PTFA over the last few years. They have both helped to create amazing events and hosting uniform sales, which behind the scenes is much harder work than it may appear to most. Thank you both, we will miss you terribly. The PTFA is solely run by volunteer parents and we are losing many of our team next school year so if you think you would like to support us, become part of the team and take on the challenge with an awesome team please contact me karinbaxter@gmail.com I would be happy to answer any questions.

Finally, we know that it is an incredibly challenging time right now – hang in there you are doing a brilliant job! (I, Karin Baxter hereby tender my resignation as Homeschooling Teacher and take on a new role as Summer Camp Leader!)

Thanks for your ongoing support and we can't wait until we can all enjoy being together again, at school and with the children.

Stay safe.

Karin & Sam, PTFA Co-Chairs.