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@StStephensPri



Newsletter 8

23rd October 2020

St Stephen's Primary Church School

Happy Half Term!

Term 1... This term, our children have each started a new class, (for many a new school too!) in the most unusual of circumstances and have adapted to new ways of doing things - learning and building friendships along the way. Two months ago we were busy risk assessing, planning and preparing to welcome the whole school and staff team back again and since then we have together implemented significant changes to how we do things and discovered some really positive side effects along the way. I am immensely proud of our school community.

In school, as nationally, we remain extremely aware of the implications of the pandemic and reaching this half term milestone in no way lessens the ongoing efforts we are making to keep each other and our children safe. I am extremely grateful to the staff team, each of whom, on a daily basis, is balancing their professional duties with managing their own health and well-being and that of their own families. Our core values have shone through during this period.

Thank you for your ongoing vigilance with regards to covid-19 symptoms and testing. I know how incredibly frustrating and inconvenient it can be to have to keep your child at home in these circumstances but your efforts to support us with this have been invaluable. Similarly, your support with the start and end of day routines and travel around school has been superb and greatly appreciated by us all.

Farewell Mrs Thomas... Sadly, Mrs Thomas is leaving us today to begin her retirement. In her time here, Liz Thomas has greeted and helped hundreds of families with all manner of questions, worries and issues over the years. It is impossible to even begin to estimate the number of conversations she has had and the number of lives she has touched. Liz has always taken the time to go 'the extra mile' for families when they needed some care and I know the whole St Stephen's family will join me in wishing her lots of love and luck for her well-earned 'retirement' and the new adventures it brings.

As Liz leaves, we will be welcoming Ellie Hocken to the office team. Ellie will be joining us immediately after half term and she is really looking forward to settling in and getting to know us all.

Farewell Ms Flood... Liz Flood's departure is going to leave a huge hole in our team. We will all really miss her energy, corridor-singing (not during Covid, obvs!) and sense of humour and the children will certainly miss her warmth, care and compassion and tremendous skill as a TA. Organising the enrichment clubs is no mean feat either, and I know you join with me in wishing her lots of love and luck for her new Welsh adventure!

As Liz leaves, we will be welcoming the familiar face of Rachel Quarrell to our teaching assistant team.

Parent Consultations... Parent consultations will take place on 24th and 26th November, between 4.00 and 6.30. These will be carried out online and I will write to you with more information about how it will work after half term. In the meantime, if you wish to speak to your child's teacher please email the office to arrange this.

Love

Courage

Creativity

Joy



Christmas Card Competition... Nikki Edwards, our new CEO and our Trustees have invited pupils to design a Christmas card for the Trust this year, so it can be distributed amongst Trust schools and contacts. Each school will submit one top entry and these designs (33 in total) will be judged independently by our Chair and Vice Chair of Trustees, and trustee Ruth Newton. The winning design will then be used in the production of the corporate card by St Andrews Press in Wells.

Please note the design will need to represent the Biblical Christmas story and be produced on one side of A4.

If your child would like to enter, please place their design, with their name written lightly on the back, in an envelope addressed to me and bring it into school by Friday 13th November. I cannot wait to see the designs!

Finally, please remember that the first Monday after half term (**2nd November**) is an **Inset day** so school will be closed to the children. Have a wonderful half term, Andy Bowman

Mindful Moments... We are lucky to have been offered a free trial to Lucy Stone's new Mindfulness venture 'School of Meditation Rocks'.

Each class is spending 10 minutes a day on mindfulness exercises and we are using Lucy's mindfulness meditations to support this. Reception even had a live session with Lucy this week, where Lucy helped them to think about how we can be kind to other people.

The staff have also been offered a free trial of Lucy's mindfulness venture for grown-ups, 'Meditation Rocks'.

Mindfulness can help to improve focus & concentration, regulate moods, reduce tension & anxiety and help us to relax.

We are very grateful to Lucy for this opportunity. If you would like to learn more about Meditation Rocks or School of Meditation Rocks, please see the website www.meditationrocks.co.uk

Mrs Blanchard

Year 6 Parents & Carers...Secondary transfer applications DEADLINE APPROACHING

We have been asked by B&NES Admissions Department to remind Year 6 parents and carers to apply for your child's secondary school place before the deadline of **31st October**.

Unfortunately, late applications significantly reduce your chances of securing a place for your child at one of their preferred schools.

If you have any queries, please contact the Admissions & Transport Team at B&NES.



End of Term Message from our Co-Chairs of Governors



Dear parents and carers,

As we come to the close of the first half of Term 1, we wanted to pause and reflect on the wonderful achievements that your school Leadership Team and Staff have made in getting our school running at as close to pre-COVID levels as possible, and the ongoing challenges being faced by our school Leaders.

As you may be aware, before starting the new school year, a tremendous amount of effort was put into re-shaping the school common areas and class rooms to make sure the school was COVID-secure and compliant with government guidelines. This included a significant amount of effort in conducting a risk assessment and responding to the identified risks with appropriate actions. The result of all this hard work has been a very smooth start to the school year. Some of the most notable positives include: a high attendance rate from the start of the school year; a huge shift in how children are dropped off and picked up from school to help with social distancing; a catch up programme of assessment and intervention to help our children recover from the limitations of the Summer Term and all this being wrapped in a strong focus on the care of children from a mental well-being perspective. The overall perception this gives is that it's business as usual, against a very challenging backdrop, and we would like to thank the leadership team and staff for this huge achievement. It is also important to recognise the role played by all parents and carers in helping with this achievement and thanks must also go to all of you for this.

However, as the children resume learning in the second half of this term and continue towards the end of the year, these challenges won't have gone away. The increasing prevalence of COVID in society means that all these measures will be all the more important and difficult to maintain, and we know Andy and his team will continue to work hard for all of us to keep the school and our children safe and secure. We know that all in the school community, be they parents, carers, governors or wider community members would want to offer their support to Andy and his team. We should recognise that it is important to continue to give them the space to work their magic in keeping things as normal as possible, and we would ask that you continue to lend your support in the next few weeks as we all hopefully head towards a peaceful, if slightly different, Christmas break.

With kind regards,

Olly & Peter

Acting co-chairs of St Stephen School Governing Body

Extra layers...As the weather is colder and we need to keep the windows open in classrooms for ventilation, the classrooms may be a little colder than usual. If your child is cold, they can bring an extra layer e.g. a school fleece, to wear inside.

Thanks for your support with this.

Reception 2021...It's that time of year when we usually hold a number of Open Day visits for parents of children due to start in Reception next year. Due to the current situation, we are unfortunately not able to hold group visits this year. However, we are very happy to make individual appointments for prospective 2021 Reception parents and carers to visit the school and meet with Andy Bowman.



Oasis Hub... is a local organisation who supports family with food packages and they have opened a Community Pantry! It's open weekly, and provides high quality food and a low weekly membership fee. For more details please visit <https://oasisbath.org/projects/>.

Top Doodlers

This week we are celebrating these wonderful doodlers. Well done everyone!

- F1 – Emma
- F2 – Scout
- F3- Max H
- F4- William
- F5 – Ivy
- F6- Clemmie
- F7- Connor
- F8- Gaby
- F9- Marli
- F10- Kwan
- F11- Amelie
- F12- Jessica
- F13- Lola
- F14- Anna

Dates:

- 2nd November, 4th January and 28th May: Inset Days
- 24th and 26th November: Parent consultations
- 11th December 2.00-2.45: Christmas Celebration
- 14th December: Reception and Year 2 Christmas Party
- 15th December: Year 1 and Year 3 Christmas Party
- 17th December: Year 4 and Year 5 Christmas Party
- 18th December Year 6 Christmas Party