

Christmas 2017 Newsletter



Wednesday 20th December 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

The festive period is nearly upon us and so we sign off for the final time in 2017 with the following information for your attention.

Christmas plays and concerts

Can we thank all of you who have attended the Reception/KS1 plays and Nursery and KS2 concerts in the last week. All the children can feel very proud of their efforts throughout and we hoped they helped bring festive cheer and joy to each of you. A huge “thank you” to Mrs Van Damms and Mr Issar for filming the Christmas plays and to Mrs Houston for copying the DVDs so quickly. For those who ordered DVDs, can we ask that you adhere to the same ruling we apply for any photographs taken at performances and ensure that *nothing* is shared on social media. Thank you for your cooperation.

PTA

Thanks to the PTA for the extravaganza that was our Christmas fair. On a cold evening the event was a huge success raising close to £2000. We hope all in attendance had a lovely time and those squished and squashed in and around the tombola stalls have since recovered!

Keeping safe online this Christmas

As part of our ongoing aim of keeping your child safe online at all times, please find below some top tips that may prove to be especially useful with the influx of devices and gaming goodies that will no doubt be making their way down the chimneys this Christmas.

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/top-tips-staying-safe-online-christmas>

Our ever changing KS2 playground

We were delighted to officially open Cici’s Celebration Garden recently. It truly was such a special occasion and to share the moment with so many of our school family in attendance was wonderful. The area has already proven to be extremely popular with our KS2 children.

In addition we are hoping that our multi use games area will be finished upon returning to school on the 3rd January. Work has currently come to a standstill as the contractors await delivery of the combined football/basketball nets. The area will also be fenced in so that when the KS2 children are timetabled to be using it their game will be contained. Alongside our gym apparatus, adventure trail and traversing wall it certainly makes for a physically active environment for the KS2 children to stay fit and healthy in.

Parental Questionnaires

Many thanks to those who took the time to complete the parent questionnaires at the recent consultation evenings we held in November. We were delighted with the overwhelming positive feedback we received but accept, in line with one or two questionnaires, further work can always be done to ensure each and every one of you are satisfied. Please find below the briefest of responses to areas for improvement:

7/ The school responds well to any concerns I raise

A couple of questionnaires indicated that they wouldn't agree with this. As a school we pride ourselves on our 'open door' policy with teachers on the playground or at their classroom doors each morning and afternoon. If, having spoken to the class teacher, you are still unhappy with the concern you have raised you should then take the matter up with the phase leader overseeing the class your child is in.

Mrs Deadman-Nursery and Reception

Mrs Knights-Year 1 and 2

Mrs Barry-Year 3 and 4

Mrs Boardman-Year 5 and 6

If, after speaking with the phase leader, you still remain unhappy that the issue has been resolved you should make an appointment to speak with either the deputy head or headteacher.

We don't want any parent/carer feeling that their voice isn't heard. It may well be that the outcome you desire isn't reached but at the very least we want to ensure that you have the opportunity to raise the matter with the appropriate channels within school.

8/ The school communicates well with parents/carers

One or two parents felt the school send out too many emails. There are occasions when we will send out numerous emails within a particularly busy week or when important events are upcoming. Ideally we would like to send out just the one weekly email containing all the information (*as we strive to do with our weekly newsletter each Thursday*) but this isn't always possible given the 400+ children and 14 classes we have here at St Mark's. We do try to make the e-mails as pertinent as possible rather than sending out on mass. Our website and Twitter accounts will often contain the information but we appreciate that not everybody is a frequent visitor to the website or follower on Twitter so therefore use email to ensure each of you have notification.

Attendance 2018 and onwards

Could we take this opportunity to make you aware that from **January 3rd 2018** we will be operating under a **new** attendance policy. The policy will be available for download via the school website in the new year. Our aim is to further inform you and help clarify the decisions made in response to a request for a leave of absence during term time. Please note that any previous unauthorised absences prior to January 3rd 2018 will not be reconsidered under any circumstances. Many thanks for your attention to this matter.

An early date for the diary 2018...

We would like to take this opportunity to invite parents/carers in to school for a start of year service in the School Hall on Monday 8th January at 9:15am. Some of you may recall we have done this previously and it has involved children from different classes sharing their hopes, thoughts, prayers and intentions for 2018. It normally lasts no longer than 15-20 minutes and Rector Mark will oversee the service. We hope to see you then to officially welcome in 2018.

And finally.....

Thank you so much for the ongoing support you provide for both your children and the school itself. We are fortunate to have such successful working partnerships that continue to help the whole school community to thrive.

A reminder that school closes on **Wednesday 20th December at 3:30pm** and reopens again on **Wednesday 3rd January at 8:55am**

On behalf of all the staff and governors here at St Mark's we wish you a wonderful Christmas holiday and look forward to seeing you all back safe in the New Year ready for the challenges ahead in 2018.

Yours sincerely

Mr. D Kay