



Newsletter – May 2019

Dear Parents / Carers,

Here is the latest update from St. Mary's after another busy half term. Well done to all of the children who have been involved in SAT's tests this half term. I am always amazed at the positive approach everyone has to their SAT's tests. Thank you also to all of the staff who work incredibly hard to prepare and support the children at this busy time of the year.

Please remember that next half term begins on **Tuesday 4th June**. We look forward to seeing you then.

Attendance

Here are the results up to the end of this half term. Well done to everyone. As you will see on the table below, every year group has an improving trend of attendance at the moment. Let's keep it going.

Y Group	% attendance rate for this academic year April 2019	% attendance rate for this academic year May 2019	Improving trend?	Trophy Winners
R	95.83%	96.13%	✓	KS1 winners Year 2
1	95.79%	96.14%	✓	
2	96.02%	96.30%	✓	
3	96.09%	96.34%	✓	KS2 winners Year 3
4	96.07%	96.24%	✓	
5	96.09%	96.17%	✓	
6	95.25%	95.61%	✓	

Playground update

Following my recent letter about the possibility of having to consider closing the school grounds at the end of the day due to damage, litter and dog waste, I would like to give you a further update. I have spoken to the Parish Council on the issue and they have agreed to add it to the agenda to discuss at their next meeting so that they can come up with ideas to support the school. I will look forward to hearing what comes from that meeting. I have also spoken with the local neighbourhood policing team who have been on site to look at the problem and they will support the school by doing random checks around the site as part of their patrols. In the meantime, may I say thank you to everyone for their continued support with this issue.

Parent Support Group

There have been questions asked recently about the possibility of setting up some form of parents group to help organise events within the school year. We are always in favour of support and always appreciate any help or ideas that come in from you. Having an active support network like a parents group not only benefits the children but also helps the already very busy staff. As you will be aware from the news, there is an incredible pressure on budgets in many public sector services including teaching and so additional fund raising is vital, especially for the provision of additional resources in school. We have recently used the funds raised at previous events to purchase some new ICT equipment including 15 new chrome book computers for the children to support their learning. I am

therefore very happy to know that we have a high level of enthusiasm for support here at St. Mary's and I thank those people who have shared their thoughts with us already and also to those people who have helped out with events that have been organised this year.

However, I would also like to make you aware that these things can't just happen overnight. They need to be set up properly if they are going to work well and they need to have clearly identified roles and responsibilities so that events are well planned across the year and don't impact too greatly on an already very hectic school year.

I would like to set up a meeting with anyone who would be interested in being part of a group like this so that we can discuss possibilities for the future. For the rest of this academic year the impact of a group like this may be limited, but hopefully we can begin to put some firm ideas together so that from September we can have some active fund raising events that can then support the school in providing things for the children in school. I'd like a meeting full of ideas and if you feel you would like to get involved, please return the slip at the end of this newsletter to register your interest. If you can't print off the slip please just let the office know you would like to attend. The meeting will be on Tuesday 18th June at 5.00pm.

Sports Day - Thursday 20th June

A quick reminder that our Sports Day will be on Thursday 20th June. The day will begin at 11 o'clock and will finish at the end of the normal school day. We always welcome your help and support and look forward to seeing you as well as the sunshine. Fingers crossed!

Swimming

As I mentioned in my previous newsletter, the swimming pool has been out of action for a while. It is in need of some major work to repair it and make it useable again. At the moment it cannot be used. We are therefore looking at the different options but as you will appreciate, the costs of repair are very high and we are looking at alternatives to resolve the situation.

This scenario will have an impact on our swimming lesson provision for this year. We have secured swimming lessons at Plympton and these will take place in the second half of this term for the children in KS2 only. Although these lessons are taking place at a cost to the school, there will be no cost to the children. In previous years we have had the luxury of being able to have swimming sessions for KS1 and KS2. Unfortunately however, due to availability, this does mean that swimming lessons for KS1 won't take place this year. Once the situation with our onsite pool has been resolved, we hope to be able to offer all children swimming lessons again. Further information about the swimming lessons for KS2 will be sent home in the near future.

School Counsellor

I have been looking into the opportunity of having a school counsellor at St. Mary's and I am very pleased to say that we have found someone who we are going to use for the rest of the school year. Ali Pawson is a qualified counsellor who will be joining us after half term to work with children. Unfortunately, Ali will be with us for only a couple of hours per week initially but we look forward to working with her to support our children in school. Please feel free to talk to me if you would like any further details.



A message from Ali –

“I’m a qualified Counsellor, with many years’ experience of working with children in schools and other settings. I have a background in the arts and am Thrive trained: using creative play to support young people’s emotional well-being, is central to the way I work. In my counselling sessions, I aim to build trusting relationships with children, so they feel safe to talk if they wish to”.

TT ROCK STARS - Wednesday 19th June



We are going to have a ‘Rock Legends’ day in school on Wednesday 19th June. This is to support the Times Tables Rock Stars work that has been going on in school this term. We would love to see children dressed up as ‘Rock Stars’ for the day and we will have a great day which will involve some inevitable times tables work! Feel free to dress up too for the walk to school. I’m sure there’s some rock legends amongst the parents/carers at St. Mary’s!

Our current average speed across the school is 5.89 seconds per question. Well done everyone!

Sun safe

At this time of year, we would also like to remind you about sun safety.

- Water bottles - please make sure that your child has a water bottle everyday. These need to be refreshed everyday.
- Hats - we would like to see children with a hat to wear. Please make sure hats are named before they come into school.
- Sun cream - the once a day sun creams that you can buy are ideal for school use. These can be applied at home before school and they avoid the need to add more sun cream during the school day. If your child brings sun cream into school they will need to be able to apply it themselves and it will also need to be in a labelled container that is kept in the classroom. Although we love the fact that we have lovely children in school who would happily share their sun cream, we do need to be careful with sharing due to some children having allergies to certain creams.

We will make sure that children have plenty of access to shade when they are outside.



And Finally... Staffing News

Mrs. Molland has decided that it is time to stop in her role as Caretaker and we are pleased to tell you that we have a new Caretaker who will be starting at school very soon. We know that you will again join us in thanking Mrs.

Molland for her superb work over the years. She will be staying with us however, as she continues in her other vital roles in school.

Welcome to Charlotte Furzeland who is joining the staff as a new part time Teaching Assistant after half term. We look forward to welcoming her to our staff team here at St. Mary's.

We'd also like to say a huge thank you to Mrs. Hampton and Mrs. Howlett. Mrs. Hampton is leaving us this week as a Classroom Assistant as she and her family prepare to move to Scotland this summer. Mrs. Howlett has been a great addition to the staff and we thank her for all of her hard work and support to the children in KS2 during her temporary role in school. Both will be missed.

We are also in the process of applying for a new part time teacher to work in Rosen Class from September. Mrs. Clarke has been an excellent member of the St. Mary's team but she is moving at the end of this year to take on a new full time teaching opportunity within the USF. This new position will be at Ipplepen Primary School and we know that you will join us in wishing her all the best as she takes on this new challenge in September. In September, Miss Lee will be teaching Rosen Class on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and we are currently in the process of looking to appoint a new teacher. As soon as we have filled that position, we will let you know.

Dates

JUNE	
Monday 3 rd June	Staff Training - Non pupil day
Wednesday 5 th June	Work Showing: 3.15-4.15pm
Tuesday 18 th June	Parent Support Group meeting – 5.00pm
Wednesday 19 th June	Times Tables Rock Stars day – dress like a rock star!
Thursday 20 th June	Sports Day: 11.00am start
Thursday 27 th June	Reserve Sports Day (if needed)
Friday 28 th June	Y2 Camp
JULY	
Tuesday 9 th – Wed 10 th July	Y4 residential to Escot
Mon 22 nd – Wed 24 th July	Y6 residential to Skern Lodge

Other dates will be added as they are arranged.

As always, thank you for your continued support with all aspects of school life.

Regards

Adrian Clements
Head of School

Parent Support Group Meeting - Tuesday 18th June at 5.00pm

Your name

My child(ren) is/are in class(es)

I will be attending the meeting on Tuesday 18th June at 5.00pm.

Signed Date

PLEASE RETURN THIS SLIP TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE.