

Dear Parents & Carers,

We've had a really busy first week back! Years 3&4 children in Belgium class and 5 India have all started their Swimming lessons at Downside Fisher for this half term; Years 1&2 attended a terrific Bright Sparks Concert at the Royal Festival Hall yesterday (sadly Reception's space was double booked, however we'll arrange for something else for them soon); Violin and Recorder lessons continue for all children; our Monday after school clubs continue for the Spring term and children's learning – particularly with their History topics – has been really super! More trips and events are coming with what will be a very busy half term – see dates and information below and keep checking the attached dates letter as usual. Our Collective Worship theme continues to focus on Genesis and the life of Joseph.

Alexis St Thames Water Works

It came as a most unwelcome surprise to see Linsey St almost out of action as Thames Water started works next to the playground during half term – with no notice given to us! Nevertheless, Mr. Wood very swiftly put a plan together to ensure ends of days are swift and that children are safe and still accounted for when leaving school. The signs indicate this issue could be with us until after Easter so please get used to us having to use additional gates for exits from school:

- START of school day: Children to come in through the playground gates as normal;
- END of school day: Years 5&6 to leave through usual playground gates; Years 3&4 to leave through additional gate at front of building; Belgium class to leave via the office;
- For Monday clubs, all children will leave at 16:30 via the office/main entrance too.

Many thanks to everyone for your co-operation in these instances where things happen which are completely out of our control! Everyone has adjusted brilliantly and been very supportive and patient at pick-up times (especially in the rain!); we're very grateful to you all for this.

Key Stage Two Tennis Coaching Day – Friday 1st March

Next Friday we're welcoming in visiting professionals so all children from Years 3-6 can have coaching sessions with their classes. Thanks to Mr. Brenta for organising what will be a super experience for our older children! ALL children from Years 3-6 including Belgium class should wear PE Kits next Friday. NB: 5 India will still have their Swimming lessons on that day, so kits should be brought in as usual in addition to wearing PE Kits to school. Children's normal PE days will still apply next week.

World Book Day – Friday 8th March

We always enjoy our World Book Day celebrations and this year we're marking this on Friday 8th March – we opt for the Friday as it doesn't interrupt with weekly learning, allows you to wash any uniform before the weekend, and also means we can book visitors with more ease as they often get snapped up! This year we're delighted to be welcoming Clara Vulliamy into school to deliver Author/Illustrator assemblies to all children during the morning. Do start getting those costumes ready – we love to see all children dressed as their favourite literary characters. No need to buy anything; we encourage creativity and imagination for this.

STEM Week – 11th – 15th March 2024

We're really excited about all the exciting events and learning opportunities next half term! One is STEM week - 11th – 15th March. To celebrate science, technology, engineering and maths, Miss Rozier has organised for a poster competition for KS1 children and a project to be displayed in our STEM Fair for KS2 children. Please see the attachments regarding this, noting different key stages/age groups. Last year we had terrific responses to this; hopefully you find the opportunity to create something for this with the children.

Reception Vision Testing

Reception children are due to have vision tested in school delivered by the NHS on 20th March. Please find attached an 'opt-out' form should you wish for your child not to have their vision checked.

School Day Timings – September 2024

Again, I'm writing with plenty of warning to inform you of some tweaks we have to make to our school day timings next academic year. As you know, we have to stagger to ensure siblings can be on time between sites etc. Because our younger children start later and finish earlier, I will have to action a change to ensure one site starts and finishes earlier, and the other starts and finishes later. From September, it will be statutory for all primary school children to be in school for 32.5 hours per week. The most obvious thing to happen would be to have OJR start and finish earlier (Early Years and KS1 get the most tired in the afternoon) and have Alexis St start later and finish later. Do feel free to give any feedback on this change – I'd really welcome your views or preferences. Please see the following document outlining why this change is necessary:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64a2f21fbb13dc000cb2e5e1/Minimum School Week Non-Statutory Guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64a2f21fbb13dc000cb2e5e1/Minimum_School_Week_Non-Statutory_Guidance.pdf)

Note, this is non-statutory guidance NOW, however will need to be in place for September 2024.

Homework

Many thanks to those of you who have provided views on our Homework offer. The responses so far suggest that you're happy with most aspects, however the survey is still open should you wish to express your views/in case you missed this on the last newsletter:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SXG4JL/>

Family Lives

Please follow link for this month's newsletter from Family Lives:

<https://mailchi.mp/familylives.org.uk/family-lives-newsletter-feb24?e=82d627eec2>

Events Next Week

Monday 26th February

Clubs continue for the Spring term.

Tuesday 27th February

Year 6 Scholar's Programme Graduation event at Goldsmith's.

Wednesday 28th February

Year 3 trip to the British Museum as part of their Ancient Rome learning.

Year 6 trip to the British Museum as part of their Kingdom of Benin learning.

Parents' Literacy course continues at Alexis St.

KS1 Recorder lessons.

Years 3&4 Belgium children swimming lessons.

Thursday 29th February

Parent Gym course continues at Alexis St with Mrs Brenta.

Friday 1st March

Key Stage Two Tennis Coaching Day. All classes from Years 3-6 to have specialist Tennis coaching sessions delivered by outside professionals. PE Kits for ALL KS2 children on this day please.

5 India swimming lessons.

KS2 Violin lessons.

PE Days

REMINDER – ALL CHILDREN'S PE DAYS REMAIN THE SAME THIS HALF TERM APART FROM RECEPTION. Please send children in wearing PE kits on these days:

Tuesdays: Reception and Years 3 & 4;

Wednesdays: Years 1 & 2;

Thursdays: Years 5 & 6.

Children in Belgium class should still wear PE kits on their YEAR GROUP'S days above.

More dates added and will continue to come in the form of the 'dates for your diaries' letter (please find attached) and more will continue to be added to this as we secure more bookings etc.

Wishing you, your families, and our whole community a great weekend ☺

God bless,

from the St. James' team.