



ST. MARK'S C. E. JUNIOR SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER 6

Thursday 19th November 2009

Important Dates for this term

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Friday 20 th November | Non-uniform Day (Children in Need) |
| Saturday 21 st November | 11+ Tests |
| Friday 27 th November | 11+ Test (in case of illness) |
| Friday 4 th December | Parents' Council 9.00 am (library) |
| Wednesday 9 th December | School Disco (more details to follow) |
| | Children's Christmas Dinner |
| Friday 11 th December | Y3 Christmas Assembly |
| | Christmas Draw (after school) |

Non-Uniform Day

Please forgive the short notice but we have decided to offer the opportunity of a non-uniform day tomorrow – to raise money for Children in Need. All monies (£1 donation) will go to this good cause. This quick, easy and profitable fund raiser is optional - children can still come to school in their uniform if they do not wish to participate.

Girls Football

The Girls' Football Team have had a successful season so far. After coming second in September's tournament, we have won two out of three of our league matches and have also won our Cup match (first round). There will be no more matches now until the new year, but we have started recruiting from Year 4 to strengthen our squad for next season. Monday training sessions will finish now and begin again when the evenings lighten after Christmas.

Parent Support Adviser (PSA)

Mrs Hallett is settling in very well and becoming busier each week! If you would like to contact her directly to arrange an informal meeting, seek advice or further help please use the following:

n.hallett@st-marks.wilts.sch.uk or mobile - **07873 427658**

The first Tea and Chat session will be on **Friday 20th November** at 9.00 am in the library. If you would like to know more about the school, meet other parents or just fancy a coffee and a biscuit please drop in.

School Profile

The Education Bill 2005 removed the statutory requirement for governing bodies to produce a Governors' Annual Report and to hold an annual parents' meeting. Governing bodies may still hold an annual parents' meeting if they wish to do so, but they are not required. The original intention behind annual parents' meetings was to ensure that governing bodies were accountable to parents and give parents an opportunity to have their say on any issues which concern them. In reality, meetings were usually poorly attended with some schools frequently citing attendance by only a handful of parents. Removing the statutory requirement on governing bodies to hold an annual parents' meeting reduces the burden of legislative requirements on school governing bodies, granting greater freedom for school leaders to manage their own relationship and communication with parents. The Governors' Annual Report and annual parents' meetings have been replaced with the school profile. Parents can access the latest School Profile version (published 8th November 2009) on: <http://schoolsfinder.direct.gov.uk/8653176/school-profile/>. In case there are any glitches we will also publish it on the school website in the download section.

Trussell Trust Christmas Boxes

So far we have received 25 boxes to pass to needy people in Bulgaria. The Trussell Trust will be visiting the school on **Monday 23rd November** to collect the boxes. This ensures they can be processed and sent in time to be received for Christmas. If you still have a box to be brought in please do so on Monday morning at the latest.

Friends of St Mark's

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 25th November at 7.30 pm in the staffroom. All are welcome.

Jewellery, accessories and nail varnish

We have noticed in recent weeks a significant number of children wearing jewellery e.g. bracelets, rings etc. Please remind children these items are not allowed in school. Watches and stud earrings are allowed (they must be removed for PE/Games/Swimming). Many children have also started wearing friendship bracelets, plastic bangles etc. and nail varnish. Please remind children that these are also not allowed in school. If children are wearing nail varnish for parties, at weekends etc please ensure it is removed before returning to school. Thank you in anticipation.

Footwear

Please note that boots (often to accompany tights) or trainers are not permitted in school.

Polite reminders

Many children are arriving at school without a coat/jacket. Wherever possible we send the children outside regardless of the weather as it is important to get some fresh air and exercise every day. However a significant proportion do not have coats and then cause further issues with supervising children inside. More and more children do not seem to have a PE kit ready for their lessons – often citing that is ‘in the wash’ or ‘mum did not pack it for me’. We would not allow a child to miss an English lesson because they ‘forgot’ their pencil case and endeavour to do the same for PE and Games. However, our resources are stretched and children are having to sit out of lessons. We would be grateful if you could check that your child always has the correct kit on the correct day. Increasingly children will need more layers for outside PE e.g. sweatshirt or tracksuit because a T-shirt and shorts is not always appropriate for British weather! Thank you in anticipation.

Arriving at School

I have received many positive comments from parents about the new routine for entering school in the morning. It is calmer, there is less traffic in the car park and children seem happier/less rushed for the first lesson. However, we have noticed many children are arriving after 8.50 am – making them late and often distressed before school has begun. Children can access the building from 8.40 am until 8.50 am (the time the whistle used to be blown). Please help us ensure a good start to the day by ensuring children are in school on time (by 8.50 am).

Christmas Craft Fayre

Thank you to everyone who managed to come along and support this annual extravaganza, organised by the Friends of St Mark's. Lots of positive feedback was received from those who attended. Details of money raised will be published soon.

School Travel Plan (STP)

The Government, through its ‘Travelling to School Initiative’ expects all schools to have an STP in place by March 2010. The STP is a key document in identifying initiatives to improve how children travel to and from school. There is a grant that can be obtained to support some initiatives if the STP meets the criteria laid out. Next week we hope to begin surveying children, staff and parents about their current arrangements and explore future improvements. Please support this important ‘fact finding’ measure to help establish how people travel to school as this will help us identify areas we can support. A successful STP can also bring pressure on road/traffic issues in the surrounding area. Please complete the parent survey as soon as possible and return via the school office. Questionnaires will be collected by the LA (to do the number crunching) on **Friday 11th December 2009**. The plan will be written in conjunction with governors, parents, staff and children in the coming months.

Emails

Increasingly parents are asking school to send documents i.e. newsletters, forms etc electronically. This is often because it suits certain parents, avoids ‘lost letters’ etc. I am currently exploring using an email service provided by Teachers2parents – who do our text messaging. However, it relies on us having your up to date email address – please inform us if your contact details have changed recently. I am conscious that it may not suit everyone and will not rush into anything just yet. More details to follow. I would be grateful for any feedback.

ict@stmarks

School website www.st-marks.wilts.sch.uk School information, policies, links and more...

Our school blog stmarksschool.wordpress.com A place to share news and ideas on life at St Mark's.

We have a growing number of online tools available to our children:

Crystal ICT www.sherston.co.uk Username: stmarksjunior password: *****

A wide-ranging collection of activities to develop ICT, mathematical and thinking skills.

Textease Studio CT@home password: *****

A child friendly program including: desktop publishing, spreadsheet, database, control, presenter, animation...

You can download free from www.softease.com or borrow a CD from Miss Hollman to install on your computer at home.

Mathletics www.mathletics.co.uk

Each child has a unique login and password to get in and can practise and get help with most areas of maths.

Merlin <https://secure.merlin.swgfl.org.uk>

The beginnings of a learning platform where children can save work, keep blogs, design web pages, discuss and share information. Each child has a unique login and password. More information on Merlin will follow soon...

Please support us in keeping the passwords for these tools safe.