



# Newsletter 6

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2019

## October

Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Parents' Evening 4.00 – 7.00 pm FOSMs Meeting 7.30 pm Training Room
Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Parents' Evening 4.00 – 7.00 pm
Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	T1 Ends
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Training Day #3 for staff only

## November

Monday 4 <sup>th</sup>	T2 Starts Osmington Bay (Y6 Residential – Monday to Friday)) Rich Parsons (Trussell Trust) in to talk about Christmas Boxes
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Photos - pop up photo studio – <a href="http://www.martinjonesphotography.co.uk/about.html">http://www.martinjonesphotography.co.uk/about.html</a>
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup>	MUFTI – Children in Need £1 voluntary donation (day before WP because of photos tomorrow)
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup>	School Photos (Individual/Siblings)
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Christmas Boxes collected from school by Trussell Trust
Friday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Fayre (after school)

## December

Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	School Disco (5.30 – 6.45 pm for Y3/4 and 7.00 – 8.15 pm Y5/6) £2 per child
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	MUFTI – In lieu of money we ask for donations to the Christmas hampers
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Carol Service – St Francis Church 7.00 – 8.00 pm
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Y3 Nativity 10.00 am in school hall – All Y3 parents are cordially invited FoSM Christmas Draw in school hall from 3.30 – 4.30 pm
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Jumper Day (swapped for sweatshirt/cardigan - uniform as normal) – no charge End of Term Assembly T2 Ends

## January

Monday 6 <sup>th</sup>	T3 Starts
Friday 31 <sup>st</sup>	FoSM Quiz for parents – more details later

## Requests for leave of absence

As a school I believe we have already managed to tread the fine line of attendance/absence and whether attendance is rewarded or absence punished. Our whole school attendance hovers around 96.4% and has done for some years, which is a little above the national average. Many parents go to great lengths to check term dates, book in the school holidays wherever possible and minimise the number of learning days requested as leave of absence. However, many do not cite various reasons – family bookings, a gift of a holiday from relatives, going on last year's dates, not reading the information on the leave of absence request form etc.

This year I want parents to think really hard about requesting leave in term time and read the information carefully before booking trips or submitting paperwork into the office. My prediction is that several families are going to become cross or embarrassed when they are contacted by the education welfare service to discuss the matter:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/schools-learning-attendance-behaviour>

The information has been on the form for more than five years. Several parents have told me in confidence that some families book or proceed with impunity because there is no incentive not to or no penalty for doing so. I think this is a shame and an approach I do not support. Just as with the parking restrictions outside of the school I warned that something significant might happen if parents didn't act reasonably and obey the rules of the road.

I have granted many absences when it meets the criteria of 'exceptional circumstances'. I have also granted permission when parents have submitted evidence e.g. a letter of support from an employer when they are ineligible to take leave from work during school holidays themselves. Without the evidence or clear justification I have to say no to many requests. Some parents have been active on social media to say that any fines are smaller than the saving from the cost of term time savings. It's a risk that some parents take.

One of the few latin phrases that stuck in my head was *caveat emptor* – meaning 'buyer beware' – particularly apt in this instance. Please be vigilant, reasonable and prepared before making decisions and submitting paperwork. I never seek to upset anyone deliberately by saying no or hosting attendance meetings/sending attendance letters – it's my responsibility.

### **Martin Jones Photography sessions:**

Martin has kindly agreed to come back again this year to run some sessions in a pop up studio in the St Mark's school hall on 9th November to support WPSA and FoSM.

Get some great family photos in time to send out for Christmas. £25 covers the session and a free 10 x 8" photograph. Look out for the posters around school and book your slot with Norma at the shop.

### **St Marks St Andrews – Christmas card competition (encl)**

We are once again holding our design competition and I attach a pdf of the entry form which gives details. In an effort to save trees we are not distributing forms in bulk, but aspiring artists can download it from our website [www.stmarksandstandrews.org.uk](http://www.stmarksandstandrews.org.uk) Children and Young People page.

### **Exeter House request**

Our charity is visiting Salisbury with our half term activities for families of children with SEN. One session for children with ASD is free. Bookings now open for Toad on the Road - Story based on Kenneth Grahame's 'Wind in the Willows' Fun for children with SEND & their families (£5 per person) Half-day session to include interactive, multi-sensory walkabout performance and lunchtime activities (sensory tent, craft & games)  
Salisbury (Wilts): Thu 24 October (2pm) & Friday 25 October (11.15am or 2pm)

### **Friends of St Mark's (FoSM)**

We will be meeting in the Training room at 7.30 pm on **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October** to discuss how we are going to spend the money we have got and how we are going to raise more. We will also be focusing on how we are going to deliver a sensory garden behind the garden room, which will benefit all of the children at the school. So, if you have gardening and/or landscaping experience it would be great to hear from you even if you can't make the meeting. Please let your class rep know or email [ptafofm@gmail.com](mailto:ptafofm@gmail.com). All welcome. Refreshments will be provided.

### **Message from Norma**

"Why do I have to keep saying the same thing over and over again? They just don't listen. I've tried everything, am I the only one?" If this sounds familiar then the Triple P Positive Parenting Programme may be for you! Starting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November in The Training Room, the programme consists of four weekly sessions every Tuesday morning (19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> November and 3<sup>rd</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> December) from 9.15 - 11.15am. It's fun, free and includes coffee and biscuits so why not join me? Please make sure you are able to attend all four sessions before reserving your place! If you are interested contact Norma Hallett, your Parent Support Adviser, via The Shop, [n.hallett@st-marks.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:n.hallett@st-marks.wilts.sch.uk) or 07873 427658.

### **School Dinners**

We are still chasing parents to clear the growing debts of school dinners. Indeed many of the children have left the school and we have been left with the debt. I will be in contact with many parents over the next week to remind them to do the right thing and clear the debt. To avoid embarrassment or antagonism please check what you owe, encourage friends and others to check (especially if they have children in Y7) and get it sorted. That way I can spend money on your children's education and not paying off bad-debts. Thank you in anticipation.

### **ArrowITT**

Every year we train a number of local graduates to become primary school teachers. We work with an alliance of eleven local schools and the University of Winchester to offer teacher training. Our alliance is called ArrowITT with Greentrees Primary School as the lead school. Details of our non-salaried school direct route would lead to a PGCE (with QTS) in 2020-21. Two-thirds of the time (120 days of the 180 in total) is spent in two, if not three, of our schools (St Mark's, Wyndham Park, Exeter House, Winterslow, Harnham, Old Sarum, St Martin's, Downton, St Andrew's and Greentrees). Details can be found via the new government service:

<https://find-postgraduate-teacher-training.education.gov.uk/course/1DD/28TR>

If you have any questions about our offer please don't hesitate to contact me.

Applications are made via the UCAS website. The website has recently changed significantly and previous pathways have changed – key information in searches could be: ArrowITT – 1DD – 28TR – SP1 3GZ.

### **Notes, reminders, updates and everything else...**

- Children are not allowed to make their own way home or meet parents in the car park after a school disco. Parents have to enter the building via reception and exit via the hall fire escapes. If you cannot pick your children up, or if a close friend/family member cannot, please do not allow them to attend
- At the disco children enter the building via the north corridor (opposite Maple/Holly Class)
- We try to get the children outside every day whatever the weather – a coat is essential equipment