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Friday 16th July 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This will be our last newsletter of this academic year. And what a year it's been! It seems like a life-time ago that I nervously slid down Earl Street in the snow and ice for my first day at St James' in January. I didn't expect that one of my first jobs would be to close the school for a second full-lockdown!

An awful lot has happened since then, and although cases are still rising, the vaccination program has brought hope to most of us of more normal times ahead.

As this is the last time I will write to you before the summer, there are quite a few things I want to cover so apologies if this letter is longer than usual!

Thank You!

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to ALL the staff here who made me feel so welcome and held my hand (metaphorically) as I learned more about the school and the local area. Everyone here has gone above and beyond to cope with the constant changes in advice and guidance over an incredibly difficult year. I am sure you will all agree that the staff have been amazing in how quickly they have adapted and how the pandemic has not affected their unwavering dedication to providing the best for each and every child in our care.

I would also like to thank all of our parents and guardians – every one of you has done your bit – from coping with your child's bubble bursting, to organising PCR tests, to supporting children learning at home and to being so understanding as we have tried to keep things as normal as possible.

And finally, I would like to say thank you and goodbye to our Year 6 children. I know this has not been how you expected to spend your final year at primary school, but you have all coped so well and made the most of what has been a very disruptive and unusual time. Good luck at your new schools – I'm sure you will be excellent representatives of the children of St James' and I wish you all the best for the future.

COVID Restrictions after Summer:

We have now had an opportunity to digest the latest government guidance (which, of course, is subject to change at short notice).

We will be adopting a cautious approach initially but I would just like to draw your attention to some of the changes we will be making (please remember, we may need to change this if things change nationally):

- Children will no longer have to sit in rows – teachers will be able to group our children again.
- If one child tests positive for COVID, the class will **not** have to isolate. The only exception to this is if we have a large number of cases at which point, Public Health England may insist we close part or all of the school.
- We will be keeping staggered start and end times – these have helped calm the traffic flow and feedback is that it feels safer.

- Children will begin to mix with children from other classes again – initially within their own year groups.

Whenever we need to make changes, we will let you know through our website, newsletter and app.

Staffing:

It’s that time of year where we inevitably lose valued staff members as they move on to pastures new. This year, Mr Devine will be leaving us to take up a promoted post at The Redeemer Primary School and we wish him every success in his new role. The school is indebted to Mr Devine for his part in setting up remote learning at very short notice last year.

Mrs Hesford will also be leaving us this summer to take up a new role at Brookhouse (so she won’t be very far away!). Mrs Hesford is a long-time friend of the school and I am sure she will be dearly missed by everyone.

But with ‘goodbyes’ come ‘hellos’!

We are delighted to be welcoming back Mrs Madbouli from her secondment at Brookhouse. Mrs Madbouli will be resuming her role as Assistant Head Teacher and a member of the Senior Leadership Team. She will be working very closely with our Key Stage 2 teams.

We are also pleased to be welcoming Miss Syeda who will be joining us a Teaching Assistant working in Key Stage 2.

And finally, we welcome Mr Newell who will be joining us as our new Facilities Manager and will help us keep the building and premises in tip-top shape!

It really has been a very difficult year for everyone. And I know how exhausted our staff and children are. I pray that you all have the most peaceful and restful of summers, and we look forward to welcoming all of our children back on Thursday 2nd September 2021.

Mr D. Stitcher
Headteacher

| Year Group | Information | Action required? |
|--------------|---|---------------------|
| Whole School | <p>Key dates: 20/07/2021 – School closure after school for Summer break <i>02/09/2021 – School reopens at 8.40am for Autumn term</i> 22/10/2021 – School closure after school for Autumn half term break</p> <p>For a copy of the St. James’ Primary, Pre-School and Nursery term and holiday pattern click here: 2021/22 Holiday Pattern</p> <p>Year 2 children that are moving up to Year 3 in September will no longer be eligible for Universal Free School Meals. School meals will cost £2.25 a day (£11.25 per week). If you think your child is eligible for free school meals – please visit: https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-meals</p> | No action required. |

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| EYC | <p>Miss Dakin and all the staff in St James' Forest Pre-School and Nursery are so proud of all the children! They have been a delight to teach this year and they have taken all the COVID disruption in their stride. A huge thank you to all the parents for their ongoing support. A big well done to our Pre - School children for their excellent Graduation performances.</p> <p>Farewell to our Pre-School children, we know you will shine bright at your new schools. We look forward to hearing wonderful things about you!</p> | No action required. |
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| Reception | <p>Thank you to all parents and children for being so supportive during this very difficult year. We are so proud of how resilient the children have been. We hope you have a lovely summer holiday and we wish the children all the best for Year 1. We will miss them!</p> | No action required. |
| Year 1 | <p>As we come to the end, it is not goodbye but see you again. All the children have been amazing, and we just want to say a big thank you to you all. It has been a pleasure and I hope the children have built amazing memories that they can keep with them forever. Thank you for your continuous support throughout the year, we could not have done it without you.</p> <p>We would like to take this opportunity to wish all the children good luck for Year 2, we know they will all be amazing.</p> <p>Please continue to utilise the excellent resources of Oxford Owls, Numbots and Timestep Rock Stars. If you need the log in details, please let us know.</p> <p>You're off to great places. Today is your day. Your mountain is waiting. So, get on your way!</p> | <p>https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk</p> <p>https://trockstars.com</p> <p>https://numbots.com</p> |
| Year 2 | <p>This year has certainly been a challenging year for our Year 2 pupils. They have had to quickly adapt to new ways of learning and learn to deal with new routines and procedures. But throughout all these new challenges, the Year 2 children have demonstrated a resilient and positive attitude, they have put their utmost into everything that we have asked them to do and they have made this year an incredibly successful one. So, it goes without saying that we are incredibly proud of this cohort and we would like to extend a special thank you to the Year 2 Parents and Carers for all your help and support this year. It has truly been a pleasure teaching all of the children and we wish them every success with their venture into Year 3.</p> <p>We hope you all have a wonderful Summer holiday.</p> | No action required. |
| Year 3 | <p>We just want to say well done to both classes. The children have worked really hard and we are very proud of the work they have produced this year. When learning from home, the children have shown great determination and resilience. It has been great to see all the extra homework they have been completing.</p> <p>We wish them all the best for September.</p> <p>Thank you for all of your continued support this year. We hope everyone has a wonderful break and stays safe.</p> | No action required. |
| Year 4 | <p>Well Year 4, we can't believe the year is over! Well done for being creative, independent, and resilient learners this year. We wish you the very best of luck in Year 5! Make sure you have fun and relax during your holidays and we look forward to seeing you again in September.</p> | No action required. |

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| Year 5 | Another fantastic week for Year 5 who have been a pleasure to teach during the last full week of term. Thank you for being amazing all year and you will be missed as you move the next stage of your life in St. James' Primary School. Please make sure you all stay safe over the holiday, have a good rest and come back re-energised for time in Year 6. | No action required. |
| Year 6 | On behalf of all Year 6 staff, we would like to wish all the pupils the very best of luck as they move onto their next step in education. You have been a wonderful year group to teach, and we will miss you all very much! Please keep in touch! From Mr Parker, Mr Mason, Mrs Valli, Mrs Sidat and Mrs Chopdat. | No action required. |

Prayer for the week:

May God's blessing go with us today,
 At the end of this school year we pray.
 That you keep us safe and give us rest
 So we start again renewed and refreshed.
 Full of health, full of fun
 Ready to come and learn again.

Amen

