



### Be COVID Aware

Do not come onto school site if you have any Coronavirus symptoms, & get tested. Maintain social distancing at all times. The symptoms are:

- High temperature
- New, continuous cough
- Loss of or change to sense of smell or taste

## Newsletter

# 11th September, 2020

office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk  
head@stjamesvaschool.co.uk

Wow, what a week for us all! I've been a teacher for 30 years, head teacher for 16 and never have I experienced a week quite like this. Wonderful to welcome you and your children back to school, and to get back to a routine, but incredibly challenging to introduce very different ways of managing the school. Thank you to those of you who have read the documents sent out before the summer break and confirmed last week - by following our arrangements, you've really helped us keep school as safe as we can for the children. We know we haven't got everything perfect just yet, but we're well on the way! Your children have coped brilliantly with the changes, and I really couldn't be more proud of or impressed with them.

We're so pleased to have welcomed so many new faces into our school family. Joining a new school can be overwhelming at the best of times, joining a new school which is learning new ways of working is really tricky. We have many new children - I hope they are beginning to settle in and are making new friends, and that you as parents have felt welcomed and are beginning to find your way around how we work - we're delighted that you've joined our school family and we look forward to working with you all. Most important to us is that we enjoy strong, positive, open and honest relationships, built upon values of trust, friendship, forgiveness and a sense of 'togetherness', all of us working together to get things as right as we can for the children. We also welcome two new members of staff - Mr Joe Munday and Mrs Karen Corby, what a time to start a new job, and for Joe, his new career! I know you will help all of us to help them settle into school life. Both have made a great start and I know the children have enjoyed their first week with their new teachers.

Mrs Doughty, Mrs Warren and Mrs Reilly have really enjoyed meeting their new families as part of the process of starting school, and we are all looking forward to welcoming our new Robins as they start school next week. It'll be a different start than in previous years, but we hope that everything runs smoothly and that as parents, you are still able to celebrate and enjoy this milestone! Thank you also to all of you who made it into the Zoom Rooms to meet your child's teacher - again, a different way of working, but hopefully helpful in establishing the start of your new partnerships. We will probably need to run parent teacher consultation evenings in a similar format later in the term, and are also planning to run our class assemblies and termly services virtually - more details in due course.

In class, teachers have been focusing on helping the children return to school, learn the new routines, talk about the impact of Lockdown, as well as carry out some assessments of where they are in terms of their learning. Clearly, we need to ascertain where any gaps may be, and fill these as quickly as we can. Our priority will be in English and maths, but we're not losing sight of the wider curriculum, and plan to teach as full a curriculum as we can. What has been noticeable is the way in which the children have returned to school, ready to learn and apply themselves fully to every task set - clearly, despite your doubts and the difficult position you were put in to become teachers for a full term, you have done a fantastic job as home educators. By the end of September, we hope to have a clear plan in place so we can continue to provide remote teaching and learning should we be placed into a second Lockdown. Currently, we're learning to use Microsoft Teams to do this, so if you want to get ahead of the game, you might like to download this software and have a look for yourselves. In due course, we'll provide you with further information. In the meantime, if any individual child is away from school due to COVID related reasons (eg having to isolate) we will provide Home Learning activities for children to complete, if they are well, which will mirror the learning taking place in school; these will be uploaded onto the school website, usually by Monday lunchtime, or paper copies can be printed for you to collect, and teachers will aim to contact you each day to see how things are going.

I am conscious that there is always a lot of information shared at the start of the year, and that this year, there is more than usual. Please take the time to read this newsletter carefully, we can only function effectively and safely if we're all moving in the same direction. Thank you, I know there's a lot to take in.

Typically, the last few weeks saw some pretty rubbish weather and now we're back at school, the sun has returned. Whatever your plans, I wish you all a very happy, healthy and restful weekend,

Very best wishes,

Maria & all the team at St James'

### Drop off and collection arrangements

I have been a little surprised by the numbers of parents who didn't seem to know about the staggered times or the one way system, despite at least two newsletters and a site plan including this information. Please follow the previously shared arrangements for dropping off and collecting your children. We particularly need you to stick to the times set - please don't arrive too early or late, as these times are set to try and reduce the number of people on or around the school site.

**8:45 - arrival of KS2 (Y3-6) without siblings only**

**From 8:50 - siblings only**

**From 9:00 - arrival of EYFS & KS 1 (Years R, 1 & 2)**

**3:15 - collection of YR & Y1 only**

**3:20 - collection of Y2 only**

**From 3:25 - collection of KS2**

Parents with more than one child should collect the youngest child first and then meet siblings at the sibling collection point.

Please avoid arriving early and the gathering at the front of school, as this is leading to crowds forming.

Please do not block pathways or gates. When waiting at the end of the school drive, please stand on the grass verges and do not block the entrance way, this is so others (especially children) can enter school smoothly and safely.

When collecting siblings or bikes, please stay out of the way of others as much as you can, so as not to block other people trying to move through.

Please don't be offended if staff ask you to move out of the way or ask you to wait - we're trying to steady the flow of people.

Please maintain social distancing and respect other people's space, especially when outside of the school site. We all have a shared responsibility and duty to keep each other safe.

Please be patient with us - we've never done this before either, and are constantly learning and refining our arrangements. We need your support, not criticism, and we can't do this alone.

So many of you have a sensible and calm approach and we really do appreciate your co-operation and patience - thank you!



### Book bags vs Rucksacks

There has been a little bit of confusion regarding rucksacks. In our uniform list, rucksacks are available for children in Years 5 and 6. In the past, we've had a fairly relaxed approach to this, recognising that younger children prefer a rucksack to a book bag. Because of the limitations placed on us regarding COVID, we ask that children in YR-4 use a book bag, which are much easier to store in class.



We know that many children have a rucksack, and we don't expect you to go out and spend more money to replace these immediately. However, from now, could we please ask that if you need to replace any bags, you do so with reference to the [uniform list](#) (which can be found on the school website), as it really will make life in class a little easier.

### A few reminders, especially useful for new families

Most letters are sent home on **Fridays**, so make sure you check emails, Groupcall messages and book bags

**Birthdays** - rather than bringing in cakes and sweets, children are invited to wear their own clothes to school. If their birthday falls over the weekend or a school holiday, they can choose the closest school day to wear their own clothes. We usually end every full term with a MUFTI day.

Each term, we will send out a **Curriculum newsletter** which lets you know what children will be learning in school - this term's will be sent home next Friday

**Contact with teachers** - sadly, we can't operate our open door policy yet, so please email teachers via the school office. They will endeavour to respond as soon as they can, and at least within 5 school days. Include in your email the best time for them to phone you (bearing in mind they will be teaching). We can only offer face to face meetings for exceptional reasons at the moment.

A reminder that **school meals** for children in KS2 need to be paid using Caterlink's online payment facility £2.15 per meal.

We are a **nut free school**, with children who have severe nut allergies. Please be mindful of this when preparing packed lunches.

Children may bring one piece of fruit or vegetables for a **mid morning snack**. No wrapped items or cereal bars please.

Remember to keep us updated with your **contact information** and any emergency contacts, this is especially important this year, as if your child displays symptoms of Coronavirus, we will need them to be collected immediately from school.

**Attendance**—schools are not allowed to authorise any leaves of absence from school, save in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays are not exceptional, so please do not book holidays during term time. To request a leave of absence, parents must complete the form available and return to school in good time.

### Safeguarding

**Everyone** who comes into contact with children has a responsibility to safeguard them from any harm or risk of harm, and keeping children safe is always a top priority. If we are concerned about a child, or think they may benefit from extra help and support, we will discuss these with you and may need to make a further referral to the Local Authority or ask for an Early Help Assessment - in most cases, you will know about this (the only exception is if we think that by telling you your child will be significantly harmed). Likewise, if you ever have a concern about your child, or another child, you can come and talk with us and we will do our best to help.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Maria Soulsby, and in her absence Sarah Morton and Ian Leach are fully trained Deputy Leads. Please be aware that where a child's well-being is concerned, we can not promise to keep information secret, although will always be sensitive, discrete and maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality.

### A Rainbow will always appear in the clouds



Our school symbol is the rainbow and is a reminder of all the values which are at the heart of our school: love, hope, peace, forgiveness, honesty, patience, perseverance, compassion, joy and koinonia.

It reminds us all that every child is loved deeply, as a gift from God. Because we love them, we teach and care for them in the best way we are able. In turn, we ask children to show that love and care towards one another. We are honest and truthful in our relationships, and we work through problems together. We also know that we will have tough days and will make mistakes, but the rainbow will always shine and things will get better, when we come together and find solutions.



We have an active and supportive PSA which supports our school in so many ways. All parents are automatically members of the PSA and are encouraged to get involved with the PSA run events. Do join Classlist as a way of keeping in touch with other parents. With so many of our usual fundraising events likely to be curtailed this year, please help maintain our fundraising efforts by using EasyFundraising—for every online purchase you make via the EasyFundraising site, the PSA receives donations which can be used to support the school.

## easyfundraising.org.uk

easyfundraising.org.uk is a simple way to raise money for the school. Sign up at easyfundraising.org.uk, add St James' as your 'cause' and you'll raise money every time you shop with Amazon, John Lewis, Next, Sainsburys and many others. It's quick, easy and very effective. Click [here](#) to link up to the site. A ['how to' guide](#) can be found on our website.



Sign up to classlist to keep up to date with all the PSA news, you can connect with other parents in your child's class, hear all about our events, how to buy tickets and requests for helpers.

To join:

1. Visit [Classlist.com](#)
2. Click on 'Sign up'
3. Select 'parent'
4. Search for St James CE VA Primary School Biddenham and select
5. Create account
6. Join your class

### . [Mums on the Run](#)



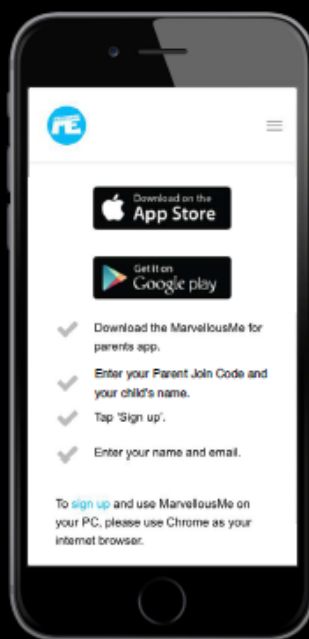
Last academic year, three fantastic mums ran 300km in June to raise money for our school. Thanks to Caz Bargery, Kerry Templeton and Eleanor Holton we have been able to purchase high quality art resources for our classes using some of their money. It was really appreciated and thank you again for supporting our school in such a wonderful way. We are all looking forward to using these resources this year!



## MARVELLOUS ME Getting Started

To get MarvellousMe, you need a Parent Join Code from your child's teacher. This creates a special bond between you, allowing them to send you wonderful news about your child's day at school.

Please ask your child's school or teacher to give you a code.



- Download the **MarvellousMe for Parents** app from the App Store or Google Play Store. It's free!
- Or sign up via your internet browser.
  - Go to [www.marvellousme.com](http://www.marvellousme.com)
  - Tap 'Get Started'.
  - Tap 'Parents'.
  - Tap 'To sign up and use MarvellousMe on your PC'.

We recommend using the Apple or Android app, so that you receive the instant notifications.

If you are using MarvellousMe on a PC, or Windows device, please toggle to receive email alerts in 'Settings.'

[www.marvellousme.com](http://www.marvellousme.com)

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Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing  
Service for Children and Young People

## Workshop for Parents of Children 4-12 years old with Sleep Difficulties

Does your child often wake-up during the night?  
Does your child struggle to settle when going to sleep at night?  
Does your child worry at bedtime?

CHUMS Family Wellbeing Team are offering a one-off virtual workshop which will provide strategies to help overcome a variety of sleep difficulties. For children 4-12 years old we will offer a Parent Workshop. (A separate sleep workshop is available for young people aged 13 years +)

If you are interested in attending this workshop, please contact us on the email address below by 30th September 2020 and provide parent/carer name, child's name and contact number. Please also state that you are interested in the "Parent Sleep Workshop".

[fwteam@chums.uk.com](mailto:fwteam@chums.uk.com)

A Child Wellbeing Practitioner will contact you within 7 working days. Due to COVID-19 social distancing measures, this workshop will be delivered online.

**PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST BE REGISTERED WITH A GP SURGERY IN CENTRAL BEDS OR BEDFORD BOROUGH TO ATTEND THIS WORKSHOP**

There are limited spaces for this workshop, please contact us ASAP to avoid disappointment.

CHUMS Main Office: Wrest Park Enterprise Centre, Wrest Park, Silsoe, Bedfordshire, MK45 4HS.  
[www.chums.uk.com](http://www.chums.uk.com)

Marvellous Me is one of the ways in which class teachers will stay in touch with you. Please speak with Dawn in the office if you need help setting this up.

THE FRIENDS OF ST JAMES,  
BIDDENHAM

A registered charity raising funds for the fabric of St James church and barn

## ZOOM QUIZ NIGHT

An online quiz to suit the whole family

*All you need is a little general knowledge, some inspired guesswork, and a little bit of luck!*

Saturday 24th  
October



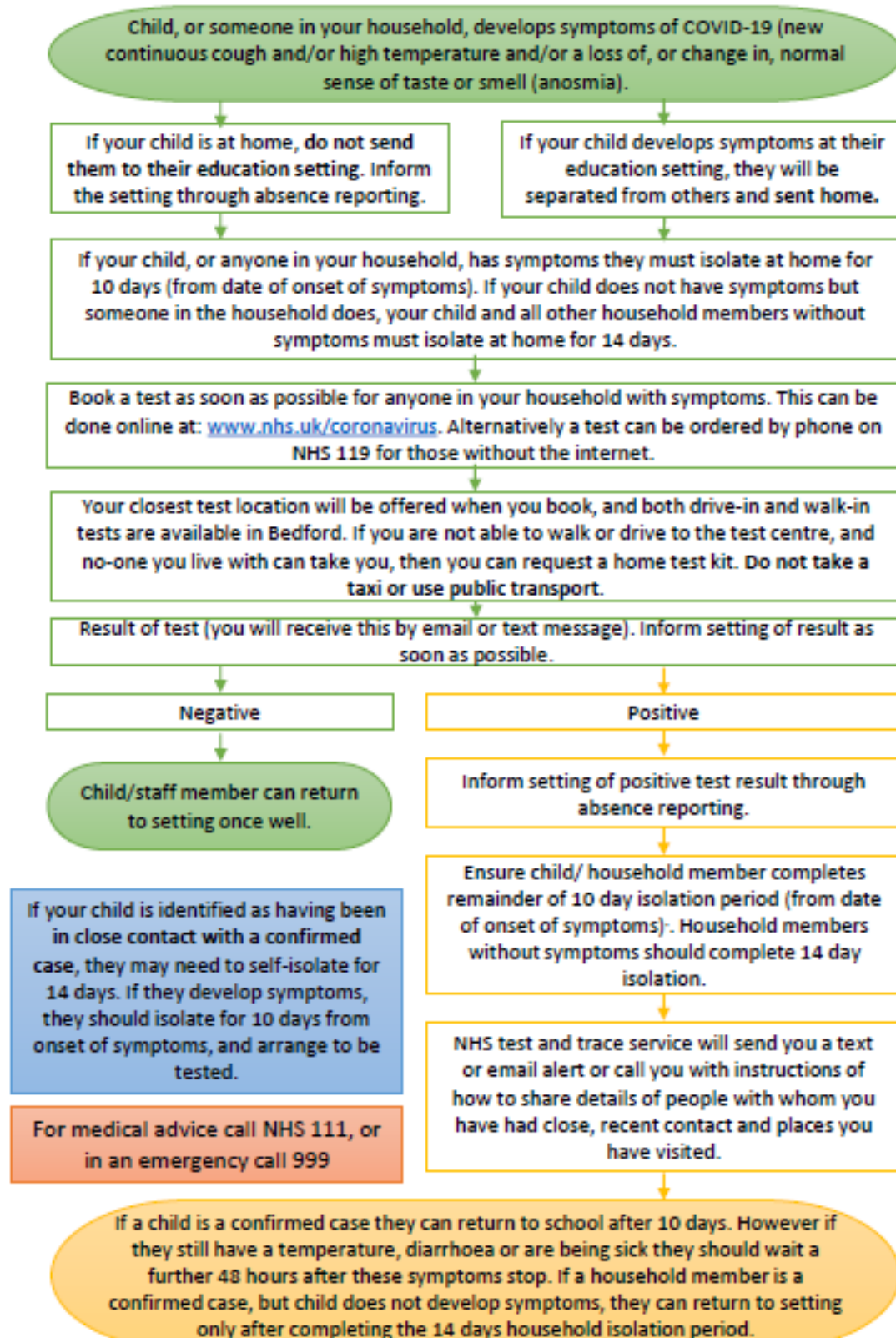
7:30 to 9 p.m.

Free entry - but donations welcome to The Friends of St James by GoFundMe: [www.bit.ly/StJamesQuiz](http://www.bit.ly/StJamesQuiz)  
To register and for participation details, contact John Barkas at [stjamesquiz@mail.com](mailto:stjamesquiz@mail.com)



## Coronavirus information for parents/carers (September 2020)

For general advice about COVID-19, contact your health visitor/school nurse service on 0300 555 0606 or [ccs.beds.childrens.spa@nhs.net](mailto:ccs.beds.childrens.spa@nhs.net)



## Year 6 Parents....



# Information Sheet Transfer to Secondary School 2021

This leaflet for parents/carers of children starting secondary school (Year 7) in September 2021 explains how to apply for a secondary school place for a child born between 1 September 2009 and 31 August 2010.

All the information you need to apply for a secondary school place is available on our website [www.bedford.gov.uk/secondarytransfer](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/secondarytransfer). It gives details of all the schools in the area and a PDF copy of the admissions booklet, School Transfer 2021, which explains how we process your application for a school place. Please read this carefully before you apply.

The website also allows residents of Bedford Borough Council to apply for a place online at [www.bedford.gov.uk/onlineadmissions](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/onlineadmissions)

You may apply using a paper application form if you prefer. An application form can be downloaded from our website or requested by contacting the School Admissions Service: email: [admissions@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@bedford.gov.uk) tel: 01234 718120

If you live in another Local Authority you must apply to your home Local Authority. Contact information is overleaf.

Application deadline 31 October 2020

## Secondary School Admissions Timetable

### September 2020

We will send you information on secondary school transfers through your child's current school.

### September/October 2020

Schools will hold their open days / evenings. Details are overleaf.

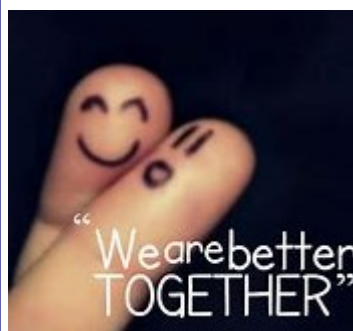
### 31 October 2020

Last day for applications.

### 1 March 2021

If you have applied online you will receive an email to let you know the outcome of your application. If you have not applied online we will post a letter to you on this day.

All newsletters will be sent home electronically using the email addresses you have given us. If you do not have access to email/internet, then please let Dawn know and a printed copy will be sent home. All newsletters are uploaded onto the school website.



Finally (!), a reminder that successful schools are built upon quality relationships between home and school - even though our contact has been limited by COVID, we must maintain our sense of togetherness. Never has your support, encouragement and friendship been so important, and your emails and messages of support this week, and during the summer term, (and your contributions to our videos!) have **meant the absolute world to us**, we have a great school here, wonderful children, but we can't do it alone, **we need you** to help us to help the children.