

## STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE-



**THIS HALF TERM WE ARE FOCUSING ON THE CHRISTIAN VALUE OF  
THANKFULNESS**

### **AUTUMN 2023 HEADTEACHER'S NEWSLETTER**

#### **Introduction**

It has been a lovely start to the autumn term this week. We are thankful for the safe return of all our children and staff. The children are all happy to be back and enthusiastic about their new classes. They have quickly settled back in to school routines and are already working hard. For parents/carers new to St Andrew's, I would like to take this opportunity of welcoming you and your children to our school family. I am sure your child will be very happy here.

#### **Communication**

We try to keep parents/carers as informed and involved as possible and are continually updating our school website [www.standrewsmethodistschool.co.uk](http://www.standrewsmethodistschool.co.uk) and Twitter account. This can be found at **Twitter@StMethodist**. Your child's class will add any exciting learning to these sites, so you can log on to see what they have been up to- you may be surprised!

#### **Seesaw**

The Seesaw app has become an invaluable tool for communication between home and school. We will be continuing to use See saw to set children's homework and share information with you. Please remember that if you have an issue you would like to discuss with a member of staff, this should not be raised on Seesaw but via a phone call or in person at a pre-arranged appointment.

#### **Meet the teacher meetings**

You will shortly receive a Home/School knowledge planner from your child's teacher, introducing themselves and outlining work to be covered this half-term. I hope you find these to be interesting and useful, when supporting your child with homework. These can also be found on the school website.

You are invited to a short 'meet the teacher' meeting with your children at home time (3.20pm) on the dates below. Please take the opportunity to attend or send a representative if you are unable to do so. Teachers will let you have the dates of these.

## Staffing

Congratulations to Miss Wynn who became Mrs Dewhurst after her wedding in August. As you can imagine, she made the most beautiful bride!

We are delighted to welcome our new school business manager, Mrs Bews and her clerical assistant, Mrs McCarthy. We also welcome Miss Sikora and Mrs Chmaissani to our team of teaching assistants. I am sure they will all prove to be great assets to our school.

## Place2Be

Our Place2Be worker, Alice will continue to work in school every Thursday and Friday. The Place2Be charity works in schools to improve the emotional wellbeing of children. Alice works with individual children and small groups who need support with any friendship issues, school pressures and other worries. This year we will also have access to a family practitioner to support parents/carers. You will be able to access free advice, resources and services. You can find out more at [place2be.org.uk/family](http://place2be.org.uk/family). Please note that parents/carers will be fully involved in any referrals for targeted support from Alice.

## Uniform

Our children are looking very smart in their uniforms, which have hopefully all been labelled. Please note that trainers and boots are NOT allowed in school, the correct footwear is black shoes. Children wearing incorrect footwear will be **required to wear PE pumps** in school. The only bags needed in school are reading folders and PE bags.

All children with long hair are required to have it tied up neatly in a bobble. Long, flowing hair is not practical at school, as it gets in the way when children are working, falling into their eyes. It also makes it easier for any outbreaks of head lice to spread. Children with long hair that is left loose, will be given a hair bobble and asked to tie their hair up. False, stick on nails are not permitted and are a safety hazard.

The only jewellery permitted are watches and stud earrings. **Children wearing hoop earrings, or any other jewellery, will be asked to remove them and keep them in their tray until home time.** School will not be held responsible for any accidents resulting from wearing inappropriate earrings or other jewellery.



## Punctuality and Attendance

It is still vitally important that your child arrives for school at the specified time and attends regularly as they missed so much learning last year. All teaching staff are working very hard to ensure all children progress and achieve their best so excellent attendance is imperative.

Our attendance level last year remained low at 93%. Our minimum target for individual pupils is 96%. This is exacerbated by the high number of children

going on holiday during term time. The law is clear surrounding this issue. Parents have NO entitlement to take their child on holiday in term time. As you are aware, school does NOT authorise any holidays. The local authority (LA) can issue a holiday penalty notice (HPN) to parents who take children on holiday without consent from the school. The LA can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if you do not pay within 21 days. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days, you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school. The school governors at St Andrew's agree that any parent who keeps their child off school to go on holiday WILL receive a fine. The attendance of all pupils will continue to be rigorously monitored and any persistent absence addressed by the Education Welfare Officer.

### **Medical Appointments**

Can you please try, whenever possible, to request medical appointments e.g.; dentist and doctors, after 3.30pm. This avoids children missing their learning by being taken out of school for appointments.

Should there be any matters of concern regarding your child you should first discuss these (over the telephone) with the class teacher or teaching assistant. They are the people who know your child best and who are aware of incidents that happen during the school day. Should you feel that your concerns have not been resolved, or if there is an urgent matter you need to discuss with me, I am happy to speak with you at a convenient time that can be arranged via the office. Our family support worker, Mrs Utzeri is available every day and can be contacted via the office.



### **School Meals**

All children in Reception Class, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free school meal. I would encourage you to take full advantage of this. For parents/carers choosing to provide a healthy packed lunch, please note that large chocolate bars (e.g. Mars Bar) and sweets are not suitable items. A healthy drink e.g.; water or carton of fresh fruit juice is fine. **No nut products are allowed.**

If you are entitled to free school meals, due to receiving benefits, then you still need to apply via the gateway. Please ensure you do this, as your child will also receive free school milk. See letter attached. Infant children are provided with a piece of free fruit every day, and all children in school have access to fresh drinking water. Please note that children are **not** allowed any other drinks (e.g. fruit cordial) in water bottles.

### **Initial Diary Dates**

19<sup>th</sup> September: Individual photographs Reception-Year 6

27<sup>th</sup> September: KS2 Experience Harvest in Walkden Methodist Church

4<sup>th</sup> October: Flu immunisations

6<sup>th</sup> October: Y6 lead Harvest worship

13<sup>th</sup> October: Y5 lead family worship

20<sup>th</sup> October: Break Up for half-term

30<sup>th</sup> October: Start back after half-term

Nursery photographs: TBC

9<sup>th</sup> November: Y4 lead family worship

28<sup>th</sup> November: Parent/Carer consultations

**Extra Curricular Activities**

We are currently putting a programme of extra-curricular activities together. Individual staff will inform you of clubs available.

**Consent Forms**

The office will be sending out data collection sheets for each child. Please ensure contact details are up to date in case we need to contact you in an emergency and return to school as soon as possible.

**Finally**

I look forward to working closely with you and your children over the coming school year. I am sure we have another happy, exciting and successful year ahead!

Yours sincerely,

Mrs A Barker  
Headteacher