



St Mark's C E Primary School

6th September 2024

Newsletter No 1

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you all had an enjoyable summer break. I would like to welcome you all back to a new and exciting academic year. For those families who are joining us for the first time we warmly welcome you to St Mark's and we look forward to working with you.

It was so wonderful to see so many happy faces coming through the school gates. Your children have made an amazing start to the term and have already settled well into their new classes.

Thank you for embracing the new drop off and collection arrangements.

There is a lot of very useful information within this newsletter, including some changes we have made, so please make sure that you have a good read. We have lots of fun things planned this term, which I know that the children will enjoy.



Thank you to the PTA for welcoming the new Early Years families on Wednesday.

Dates to remember
Added dates in yellow

Term 1

September

12th (Thur) Kent Test

17th (Tue) EYFS Little Wandle Parent meeting

19th (Thur) Y1 Little Wandle Parent meeting

19th (Thur) AIM writing day at St Barnabas (invite only)

October

3rd (Thur) School Census

3^d (Thur) Parent Meeting/Focus Group re Smart Phones and Social Media

4th (Fri) – 10th Scholastic Book Fair

23rd – 25th Y6 Bowles Rocks residential

24th (Thur) Y2 Victorian School Day

Term Dates etc are on our website
www.st-marks.kent.sch.uk



Aspire, Believe, Succeed

Read to Succeed 2024-2025

We are excited to announce that Read to Succeed is back for another academic year. Our drive to develop our children's pleasure in reading continues.

We have made a few tweaks to the rewards and are aiming that all children earn themselves a visit to one of our reading parties.

Number of Reads	Reward
25	Pencil
50	Badge
75	Bookmark
100	Book, from The Book Cabinet
150	Ice Cream Sundae party
200	Book, from The Book Cabinet
250	Mr Bird's Taco party
300	Waterstones trip to buy book of choice

As before children earn points for each read that they undertake.

Children in Early Years and Key Stage 1 should be aiming to read at home at least 5 times per week for 15-20 minutes.

In term 1, Early Years children may count listening to a bedtime story as their reading.

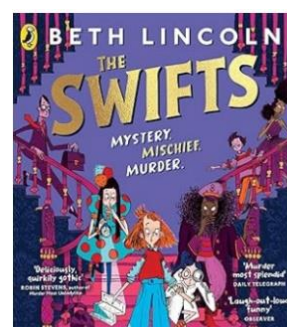
Key Stage 2 children should be aiming to read up to 30-40 mins each time, again ideally 5 times a week (or more!)

PLEASE make sure that no matter what year your child is in that the reading is recorded in their reading journals and counted by adults in school.

Rewards will be handed out to children as they reach each milestone and we hope to be giving out our first 100 read prizes just after Christmas.

Many of our teachers have been busy reading over the summer.

I was lucky enough to find time to read a small mountain of books on my summer break including two fabulous books that our older readers would love. **The Nine Night Mystery by Sharna Jackson** and **The Swifts by Beth Lincoln** were wonderful mysteries with twists and turns throughout. Both are available in my office if anyone would like to borrow them. Mrs Crane



School Values & School Story

Following a review, undertaken with Rev Claire, we have taken the decision to change the school values and school story, as we feel that they are a better fit for our school and community. The Christian values which inspire and focus our community are **courage, compassion** and **creativity**. These values help us nurture self-respect and respect for others both within and beyond our diverse community. They encourage learning, wellbeing and service. With this vision, we promote a safe, stimulating, caring and enjoyable learning environment, educating through a broad and balanced curriculum, which provides a wide variety of opportunities for children to grow and succeed. We Aspire, Believe, Succeed.

Courage – to speak up, advocate for others, try new things. This speaks to Faith.

Compassion – kindness, service, justice, empathy, respect. This speaks of love.

Creativity – children as God’s creation, in the image of God, creating new things. This speaks of hope.



The school story is now the **Feeding of the Five Thousand** (Mark 6:30-44). This story has many layers that can be used at increasing depth through the school and can link to many topics and learning ideas. The story is in St Mark’s gospel.

These have been introduced to the children in assembly and there will be follow up assemblies and work on these within the classes.



New School Rules

This year we have revamped our school rules. We have taken the decision to reduce the wording, making them easier to remember and understand. The children were introduced to the rules in assembly on Wednesday. We also had an assembly today to look at these in more detail, so they can hopefully talk to you about them.

Our new rules are:

Safe

Ready

Respectful

These have been chosen as they can be applied to a wide range of situations and behaviours in school. Every classroom displays these and they are also around and about our school.

When managing incidents all staff will be referring to these rules. If you have any questions about these please do not hesitate to talk to Mr Bird or Mrs Crane.

PTA Update

Welcome back! You should have received our Summer Newsletter already so here are the “highlights” for you;

1. St Marks CINEFest outdoor screening of WONKA; Earlybird prices end 7th September <https://st-marks-tw-pta.sumupstore.com> .
Volunteers also needed to help: <https://signup.com/go/XYdBgRi>
2. WONKY BAR Golden Ticket Event: Monday 16th to Friday 20th September after school - £2 per bar. Six volunteers needed to help per day: <https://signup.com/go/XYdBgRi>
3. Recruiting for PTA Chairs and Secretary roles before the AGM on 9th October; <https://www.st-marks.kent.sch.uk/pta>
4. Can any PARENTS help us source flooring and insulation for our dedicated second-hand uniform shed? Contact: pta@st-marks.kent.sch.uk
5. Cashpot for Schools: sign up with ASDA rewards by downloading their app and scan before you shop to raise us money!



Update from the Governors

The governing body also carried out a review and they have put together the goals that we will work towards over the next 3 years.

3-year goals

In three years' time, St Mark's CEP will have built on the strengths that we have in leadership, pastoral care and teaching to support every child, as individuals, to reach their potential, academically and socially. We will have attracted, retained and developed our strong teaching team, whilst supporting their wellbeing. We will have developed our relationship with parents and the wider community to increase our pupil roll. We will be delivering good levels of tuition in sport, music and art. Our relationship with St Mark's Church will have grown even closer and stronger. To achieve this our priorities over the next three years will be –

- To provide pastoral care for our children of the highest order whilst supporting the wellbeing and resilience of our staff. Our culture will include parents fully in the children's education and school life generally, with the church and the wider community embedded.
- To challenge and support our children to be the best they can be, through individual assessments and working towards stretch goals.
- To support our staff to develop professionally and to maintain their wellbeing, in order to keep them strongly engaged and motivated.
- To develop an Annual Marketing Plan and a sustainable, committed marketing team, with the support of staff, parents and governors. The plan will drive activities to improve our presence and reputation in Tunbridge Wells, to increase our pupil roll, and to further engage parents in order to extend our offer in sport, music and art.

PE Uniform

Please can we remind you of the PE uniform which is on our website:

[St Mark's Church of England Primary School - Uniform \(st-marks.kent.sch.uk\)](http://st-marks.kent.sch.uk)

Please note we do not allow cycling shorts for PE. The uniform policy wording will be amended to that effect, to provide further clarity.

Early Years Tours 2025

Is your child or anyone you know with a child starting Early Years in September 2025?

We are offering Early Years tours with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and have the following slots still available:

w/c 16th September 2024: every day at 9:30 am or 11 am

w/c 30th September 2024: every day at 9:30 am or 11 am

If you would like to book on one of these tours, please let us know the date and time you require.

Head's Hero will return next week!

Yours sincerely,

Mr S Bird
Headteacher