Newsletter 3

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the children settle in to their new classes, we already need to encourage the families of our new Year 6 children to apply for their secondary school places! Alongside this, with our new Reception children starting their first full day in school today, we will start showing round parents thinking about schools for their children starting primary school in September 2025.

This week we have our first two school trips, both on Thursday, Year 2 going out to visit Weymouth and Year 3 off to Tokes Farm in Semley. Year 3 would welcome one more adult to go with them, leaving school at 9.30am and returning at about 2pm. Please email the office if you could go (without a baby or younger sibling please!).

**School Admisions – Primary and Secondary Schools**

Families of children in Year 6 must apply for a place at their preferred **secondary school by 31st October 2024**please remind any parents you know to do this before that date, there are sometimes families who forget to apply in time!

For **Reception places, families have until 15th January 2025** to apply. We have tour dates available on our website or from the school office if you know someone who’s interested in a place for next September.

See the attachments for information and the link to the Dorset Admissions website to apply online.

**Nut-Free School site**

For our new families, please note that we are a nut-free school, including the outside areas. This is to support members of our school community with severe nut allergies. A child was seen at pick up time with a bag of nuts last week – a nice healthy snack for them, but not on the school site please!

**Fairtrade Fortnight - 9th to 22nd September, and Fair Trade Tea – Saturday 21st September, Quaker Meeting House 2-4pm**

We will be talking to the children about Fairtrade products in assembly today and encouraging them to look out for the Fairtrade logo and bring in wrappers from Fairtrade products during this fortnight.

Please go along to the FairTrade event on 21st September, a wonderful thing to do with your children to directly help farmers and their families to improve their living standards.

**Shaftesbury Carnival – Saturday 28th September – PTFA Walking group entry**

Following our cup-winning entry in the afternoon carnival last year, the PTFA have entered again, this time on the theme of The Colour Run. Places should be booked on Classlist. Children and adult helpers in the parade should wear bright colours such as  white tops covered in bright paint, and running shoes. Faces that need painting will be done when the group gathers in the carpark at Abbey View Medical Centre at 1.45pm on the day. For any more information please email abbeyschoolptfa@gmail.com

**Tea-Time Family Service in St James’ Church – Sunday 29th September at 4pm**

Please come along to this new service aimed at welcoming children and families to St James’ Church.

**Parking near our school**

Please could our new and existing parents who arrive by car be very mindful of the consideration for our neighbours that is needed when dropping off and picking up children. Please don’t park on yellow lines or where driveways or other cars will be blocked in. We are here to teach the children not act as traffic wardens in the streets around the school!

There is only room on the school site for adults who work in the school or parents who have been given a parking permit by the school due to a specific need.

We know it’s a difficult location with narrow roads and limited parking opportunities but we urge parents to park a little further away and walk for a few minutes to help avoid the congestion in front of the school.

Thank you to all of you who help us by parking considerately!

**Parents Evenings – Thursday 17th October and Monday 21st October (3.30-6pm)**

Please note the dates of these parents evenings which we have moved to the last two weeks of the first half term.  Booking process will be sent out on Monday 23rd September.

**Christmas Shoe Boxes – To be ready for collection by Wednesday 23rd October**

We hope that lots of our families will feel able to put together a Christmas shoe box for a child in great need of your help.  So far we have given out about 30 boxes to families, we were given 35 initially but have asked for some more to be delivered to school in case more families and staff are able to take part. It’s a wonderful way to help your children to learn the value of giving to those in need. Please come in or email the office if you would like to take part. Please get your boxes early to make sure we meet the deadline.

More information and a delightful video on

[www.wessexrotaryshoebox.org.uk](http://www.wessexrotaryshoebox.org.uk/)

**Bluebirds after-school club**

We are very pleased that the new Bluebirds after school club is up and running, based in our school library and using our Hall and outside spaces during the club. You can drive on to the school site to pick children up, collecting them from the door at the top of the slope on the right-hand side of the school building. Please use the link below to book places:

<https://bluebirds.pembee.app/>

If you have any problems please email them on abbeybluebirds@outlook.com or call on 07831160604 (it will be answered between the hours of 9am and 6pm).

**Forest School – Wednesday afternoons**

Year 3  continue with their sessions on Wednesday,  followed by Year 4 from 2nd October and the our new Reception class from 23rd October. Every class will have three weeks, then some more weeks later in the year.

Children need to have trousers and long sleeved tops, wellies and a waterproof coat (with overtrousers if they have them). The Forest School philosophy is to wear the right clothing to go out in all weathers.

**Our concerns about smart phones, gaming and social media**

Thank you for all the positive messages on this subject. We intend to form a group of parents and staff to look at this area, in the meantime, some information about taking action on delaying when children have Smart phones, and some reminders on age-rating for games below, thanks to some of our parents for both these contributions:

Link to the pledge: <https://parentpact.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>

Their guide for schools: <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/schools-guide>

Brilliant links in this guide, including how to join local groups against Smart phones for young children and a link showing a good range of alternative, non-smart phones on the market.

Information on game age-ratings:
- Minecraft has been rated as suitable for 7+ up to 13+ depending on which version of the game you are playing.
- The Fortnite age rating is PEGI 12, ie children over the age of 12, or teens
- Lego Fortnite has been rated as PEGI 7, meaning that the content is suitable for children over the age of 7. You do have to install the main Fortnite to get it, but then you can add age restrictions.
- Although Roblox is PEGI 7+, the user-created content falls outside this rating and may contain elements that are only suitable for older children. There is an age limitation system for restricting what content can be added, though it is imperfect.
- Nintendo Switch has an age limitation system, which is imperfect but pretty good.
- Steam has a wide range of games, including a lot of unsuitable ones, and you can see the videos there too. Steam is not intended for children under 13, and has little or no age restrictions for younger children. Other games platforms have similar issues.

- Videos of these games are accessible  on YouTube, Twitch or TicTok, etc.

**Holidays in term time**

Over the summer holidays, schools were issued new guidance to support higher levels of attendance at school and a reduction in days missed due to family holidays in term time.  Parents are required to email the school office with the dates of any planned time off for family holidays in term time. Schools are required to mark all days missed for family holidays as unauthorised. If a child has 10 or more periods of unauthorised absence (5 days or more) in a 10 week period, one or both parents (depending who was involved in the holiday) will be fined by Dorset Council at a new rate of £80 per parent, rising to £160 if not paid within 21 days.

**Welcome Service in St James Church for our Reception families – Wednesday 25th September at 9am**

We would like to invite all our Reception families to join the Reception class and Year 6 class for a short service of welcome in St James Church at 9am. Rev. Helen will lead the service and give a little welcome item to each of the Reception children. Please drop them at school at the normal time, then go over to the church. The children will come in to the church at 9am with the staff and Year 6 children. It will be a lovely, gentle event to welcome them all to our church school community.

**Photos of activities and holidays**

Please send in a photo of your child at a club or activity for our activities display. If you went away for a holiday in the summer, please send a photo for our Geography display

Michael Salisbury, Head teacher

**TERM DATES 2024 – 2025**

**Autumn Term**

**INSET DAY                                                      Tuesday 3rd September 2024**

Children start back                                       Wednesday 4th September 2024

Autumn Half Term                                        Monday 28th October – Friday 1st November 2024

**INSET DAY                                                      Monday 4th November 2024**

Autumn Term ends                                      Thursday 19th December 2024

**INSET DAY                                                      Friday 20th December 2024**

Christmas Holidays                                       Monday 23rd December 2024 – Friday 3rd January 2025

**Spring Term**

Schools due to start back                           Monday 6th January 2025

Spring half term                                            Monday 17th February to Friday 21st February 2025

Spring Term ends                                         Friday 4th April 2025

Easter holidays                                              Monday 7th April to Monday 21st April 2025

**Summer Term**

Schools due to start back                            Tuesday 22nd April 2025

MAY DAY Bank Holiday                                 Monday 5th May 2025

Summer half term                                          Monday 26th May to Friday 30st May 2025

**INSET DAY                                                       Monday 2nd June 2025**

Summer Term ends                                       Tuesday 22nd July 2025

**INSET DAY                                                       Wednesday 23rd July 2025**