



St Swithun's Half Termly News

Week ending 27th May 2023



Valuing individuals
Aspiring and achieving together in faith

St Swithun's C of E Primary Academy's Vision

Love bears all things

Believes all things

Hopes all things

Endures all things

(1 Corinthians 13:7)



Our Gospel Virtues for Summer are: FRIENDSHIP & RESPECT

Hi Everyone!

Well, here we all are, ending yet another half term. Despite it only being 6 weeks, it's been jam packed with an array of things that I am sure your children have shared with you. Sadly, it also means that just over the horizon is Summer 2, which will be the finale for the 22/23 academic year. I say sadly, because it will mean that our Year 6 children will be leaving us for pastures new. That said, I know that they will be involved, along with the Year 5 children in Newstead in many exciting and varied projects and activities that will hopefully leave them with even more fond memories of their time at St Swithun's. It's been a long journey for many of them, and this is something they will be reflecting on as they prepare for their next adventure.

This half term has been one in which we have asked our Year 6 and Year 2 children to really shine and show how they have developed over time in terms of their learning and in terms of their resilience, motivation and personal growth. Both sets of children have been involved in National Tests which are statutory and set by the Government. While many in education, including the staff and governors at St Swithun's feel that this could be done better in terms of what the children go through, I can say with pride, that all of our children have done themselves proud in the way in which they accessed and processed the questions and the way in which they performed overall during the tests. I have been amazed when watching the children. Despite the tests being challenging, I saw them dig deep and give their all. As a Head teacher I could not have asked for more from any of them. They are a credit to you and the school. I'd like to finish by acknowledging the role played by all staff involved during the buildup and during the specific planned weeks. The support given to all the children was immense and went along way to ensuring they were able to be at their best. A big thank you to all the parents and carers too, as the home school partnership and collaboration ensures that there is 360 support which is so important.

I couldn't write this News Letter without acknowledging what an amazing success the King's Coronation event was. What a day! It was truly an occasion that will stay with me and I am sure all of you that came, for a very long time. The turnout for the picnic was greater than I had expected, and even though we did this part of the event in the dining room, there was still a great buzz in the air and watching families and friends conversing, laughing and eating, was a brilliant. I guess we are all privileged to have been in a position to be celebrating a Coronation as it is History and something that the children can look back on and talk about as they move through their lives. A good tale to talk about with future generations.

As with all great events, they don't just happen by default. There was a colossal amount of planning and preparation leading up to the day and then a monumental effort in terms of staff, children and volunteers that helped it all come to life. I would like to firstly thank Mrs. Furmage and the PTA who orchestrated the day's proceedings. In the lead up, the team were busily beaver away at a multitude of tasks, and it's this meticulous preparation that ensured the day was successful. I owe the PTA an apology as I forgot to mention them during my opening speech. The current PTA has achieved a great deal in a short time, with very limited numbers. This makes their efforts even more remarkable and therefore deservedly receiving the positive recognition they are getting from myself, the Governing Body, the staff and members of the school community. A huge thank you to the few who have contributed so much! It was a day to remember and one that the children and community will talk about for years to come.

As ever, I want to end by extending my thanks to all the staff, Governors and volunteers associated with St Swithun's School. The school wouldn't be what it is without them. Each adult associated with the school brings a unique talent and skill set that ensures our children are given many chances to develop positively as individuals and to develop positively in the academic subjects and in their understanding of what it is to be a part of a Church of England school. Despite it being our last half term of the year, I am really looking forward to the adventures we are going to have as a community.

In other news...

Some of you will already know, but for those who don't, Mrs. Ogden gave birth to her son, Theo last week. Mum, baby and dad are all doing well, and I am sure that you will join with all of us in wishing the family all the best as they embark on this new and exciting chapter of their lives. We also look forward to meeting the young man at some point next term.

We would also like to say a final farewell to Miss Wilson who leaves us today to begin her new adventure at St Giles. She will be hugely missed by all.

It's with great sadness that I have to announce that Mrs. Preece, a long standing and integral part of the school and the St Swithun's community, has decided that the time is right to finish at the end of this academic year. Mrs. Preece has given 25 years, which is actually all of her teaching career to St Swithun's school and this for me highlights how dedicated she is to the place, its children and the community. As with all of us, we eventually reach that time when we reflect on where we are in life, and that can sometimes lead to making a key decision. The decision has not been taken lightly, and I know, it's been an extremely difficult one in terms of her connection to the school. I am sure that you will join with me, the governors, staff and children in acknowledging the immense contribution to the school that's been made by Mrs. Preece and ultimately, to thank her for playing such an important and pivotal role in so many young people's lives.

Whilst on the theme of staff finishing this year, another sad announcement is that Mrs. Slater, our Assistant Head Teacher and Inclusion Lead has also reflected and made a key decision to reduce her working hours, starting from September. This unfortunately means that we will be losing another valued and important member of the St Swithun's community. Many of you will have worked closely with Mrs. Slater over the years, and I know, will have a lot to thank her for in terms of the part she has played in supporting children's development, learning and individual needs. The Governors, staff and children wish her well as she embarks on this new adventure and thank her for all that she has done for the St Swithun's community.

Finally, I'd like to wish you all a super half term. Enjoy to the max, your special family time together and we will look forward to connecting again with all of you on Monday 5th June.

Mr Charly



Key Messages



Whole School Attendance – Currently 87%

School Target is 95%

95%	=	47 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 8 days in total or 1 week and 3 days
90%	=	95 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 16 days in total or 3 weeks and 1 day
85%	=	142 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 24 days in total or 4 weeks and 4 days
80%	=	190 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 32 days in total or 6 weeks and 2 days

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

WHAT DO YOUR
ATTENDANCE
FIGURES
ACTUALLY MEAN?

BE SMART BE THERE!

Percentages based on 190 academic days

Our Governors have been looking closely at the school attendance and while they are pleased with many of the things they hear and see, they are concerned about some of our children who have missed a significant amount of school time, not only this year, but in previous years too. The facts above, highlight clearly the negative impact that not regularly attending school can have on a child. I am truly concerned about some of our children who are not where they could or should be in terms of their age and stage. While sometimes, there are other contributing factors that impact learning, many of the case studies explored by the Governors show that it's the persistent absentees who are the furthest behind in terms of academic progress and personal growth.

I have connected with many families this year in terms of their child's attendance and while in some cases there has been improvement, I feel that there is still a long way to go. We can only do our job, if the children attend. It's as simple as that.

The Governing Body in response to their concerns have appointed a link Governor to support with attendance issues. There will also be a letter sent out next term highlighting new Government legislation and also, the Governors response and thoughts around persistent absenteeism.

*Children **should attend school and be on time** to walk in with their class at the start of each day. Children should be lined up on the playground by **08:45**. There will be an adult on the playground ready to greet them. School starts at **08:50** so please ensure your child arrives on time as anything after 09:00 is classed as an unauthorised absence.*

Uniform



It is important that children are dressed appropriately. Please do not send your child to school in hoodies or trainers. We have seen a number of children wearing incorrect uniform to school recently. The correct school uniform is black formal school shoes – no trainers or hoodies. Trainers are to be worn only for PE.

Sunscreen, Water and Hats



Now that we seem to be having some warm weather, please can we remind you to ensure that your child wears a sun hat to school and all day sunscreen is applied before they come to school. They will need to have their water bottle with them so they can keep hydrated throughout the day.



PE kits

Please make sure that your child has a full PE kit in school every Wednesday and on their specific PE days. Overall, I am really pleased with what I am seeing so thank you. However, there are a still a small number of children who are still not coming to school with kit or if they do have kit, it's not necessarily the correct kit. KS2 children can bring their kit to school on a Monday, leave it in their locker and take it home again on the Friday.

Jewellery

I have noticed that some children have come to school wearing hooped earrings, bracelets and other non-uniform items. In terms of earrings, children are permitted to only wear studs and these must be removed for PE sessions. All other non-essential items of jewellery should remain at home. Watches are permitted but children must understand that they are responsible for their watch so I would urge that they don't wear anything too expensive or something that deemed to be a family treasure.

Class Dojo

Class Dojo is an effective tool that allows instant communication between school and parents and carers. It's great to see so many of you interacting and using this app to its full. However, could I please ask that you think about the times you send staff messages, thinking mainly about their well-being and personal lives outside of school. I feel that in terms of regular interaction between yourselves and members of staff, the hours of **07:45 and **18:00** are more than acceptable and should allow that free flow of information between both parties. I have also asked all staff to respect your well-being**

and personal lives too. You should not receive messages after **18:00** or before **07:30** unless there is an emergency.

Staff have fed back that since including the above in our Newsletters, the acknowledging of well-being and personal lives has been evident from the vast majority of parents and carers, so thank you for that. It's much appreciated.

In addition to the above, it's unlikely that teachers and staff in KS1 and KS2 will respond to Dojo messages during the day as they are involved with supporting and teaching your children. If you have a message for the teacher or teaching assistant, could you please call the school office, and staff there will get the message to the teacher or teaching assistant. It's slightly different in EYFS and Mrs. Howlett has said she does check Dojo occasionally due to the timings of the children coming and going to and from the unit.

Next half term



5th June - All children return to school

6/7th June – Year 6 Residential visit to Mill Adventure Base

9th June – Chance to Shine Cricket sessions begin

12th June – Phonics Screening Check Begins

14th June – KS1 Visit Southwell Minster

16th June – PTA Father's Day Breakfast

20th June – KS1 & KS2 Sports Day

21st June – EYFS Sports Day

26th June – Reserve Sports Day

28th June - Newstead Visit Nottingham Trent University

29th June – Road Safety Day

3rd July – Year 6 Transition Week

3 – 7th July – Transition Week (F2 to Year 5)

12th July – KS1 Visit to Cleethorpes

14th July – Newstead Visit Southwell Minster

17th July – Reports Out to Parents & Carers

19th July – Newstead Production – Performance to Parents and Carers

20th July – School Summer Fayre

21st July – Year 6 Leaver's Service at St Saviour's Church

Other key dates will be added to the school diary so please keep an eye out for Dojo messages.

See you next term!

School Sport Photos

Concentrating very hard.....

