

ST. MARK'S CE PRIMARY NEWSLETTER



8th September 2026

Dear Parents, Carers
and Children,

Welcome back

We hope you had a wonderful summer break and enjoyed the glorious sunshine! I would like to extend a very warm welcome back to you all and I hope the return to school this week has been a positive and smooth transition.



Mrs Henderson (our Year 5/6 Teaching Assistant) will be our Mental Health lead and will work closely with Miss Button to support children with their mental health and emotional wellbeing through Thought-Full (an external service offering mental health support in schools) and through her role as Wellbeing Mentor. For any queries relating to this, please email mbutton@st-marks.w-sussex.sch.uk

Just a quick reminder about the staff structure this term:



Ms Kelsey's Head Teacher days this term will be a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.



Mrs Poole (our Year 5/6 class teacher) will be sharing the role of Assistant Head Teacher.



Miss Button's Head Teacher days will be a Thursday and Friday. Please do not worry if you get the days confused - both are able to access the general 'head' email and will be able to answer your questions or queries. Miss Button has also extended her working week to 4 days and will be in on a Tuesday and Wednesday as Assistant Head and Inclusion Lead (formally known as SENCO). For any SEND related queries, please email mbutton@st-marks.w-sussex.sch.uk

Individual school photos - date change: 23.9.26

We have the school photographer coming on Wednesday 23rd September, in the morning to take individual photos of each child as well as any sibling groups. If you would like your pre-school child photographed with you child/ren, please take them all to the school hall from 8:40am.

Safeguarding spot - screen time

This has suddenly become a 'thing' and it came out of nowhere... nobody prepared us for their (and our) obsession with smartphones, tablets, laptops, games consoles and other digital devices! Did you know, as an adult in the UK, we check our phones on average 6 to 7 times an hour and spend over 2 hours on our phones, one way or another, every day?

Take a look at this website for some great advice for parents/carers: <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/screen-time-advice-for-parents/>

Praise Postcards

The following children have received a postcard in the past few weeks:

Lexi Ansell, Aria Benson, Georgia Bentley, Billy Bickerdike, Ada Black-Brolly, Joseph Boakes, Georgina Bostock, Harper Clayton, Billy Coulton, Cody Dowling, Arlo Frid, Leni Handingham, Jasper Hardman, Albie Hobden, Ambrose Hobden, Thomas Holloway, Ayla Hornett, Summer Joslova, Finley Land-Smith, Anna-Mae Liu, Ivy Neen-Gurney, Rafael Pairisi, Daisy Payne, Woody Plant, Caelan Power, Eliza Riches, Gigi Riches, Jack Robinson, Mia Robinson, Lila Roddy, Lorcan Roddy, Roma Romain, James Seabourne, Aliyana Small, Ned Szajdzicki, Leo Tackie, Franklin Thomson, Edward Walker, Chloe Webber, Bertie West, Hector West

Diary Dates

9th Sept - Forest School Year 2
17th Sept - Bramble Swimming
23rd Sept - Individual Photographs
30th Sept - Football Festival Year 3 and 4
6th Oct - Rugby Festival Year 5 and 6
7th Oct - NEARS Football Year 5 and 6
12th Oct - PGL Residential Laurel
14th Oct - Class
19th Oct - Parents Evening
20th Oct - Cross Country Year 4, 5 and 6
21st Oct - FGB
22nd Oct - Parents Evening
26th Oct - Half Term
30th Oct -
3rd Nov - Staplefield Bonfire Night
11th Nov - Remembrance Service
13th Nov - Children In Need
17th Nov - Sports Crew Training
25th Nov - Get Active Dolphin - Year 5 & 6
2nd Dec - Girls Indoor Cricket Year 4, 5 & 6
18th Dec - Christingle Service
21st Dec - Christmas Holidays
1st Jan
4th Jan - Return to School

Free School Meal changes

Going forward, schools will record FSM eligibility under one of two categories:

Targeted FSM – for families receiving Universal Credit with household earnings below £7,400 per year. These pupils will receive a free school meal and are eligible for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. The child's school will also receive Pupil Premium funding.

Expanded FSM – for families receiving Universal Credit with earnings above £7,400 per year. These pupils will be entitled to free meals only.

(Please note: ALL pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will continue to receive a free meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meal scheme.)

What this means:

If your child currently receives FSM, their eligibility will be re-checked before the new school year. If West Sussex County Council (WSCC) do not hold the relevant information you may be asked to provide updated information to confirm whether your child qualifies.

As re-checks are processed, if you have previously applied and WSCC hold an up-to-date email address, you will receive an email notifying you of updated eligibilities.

Households that no longer meet the criteria will not automatically continue to receive FSM, as previous transitional protections in place since April 2018 will end when the current school term finishes.

Next steps:

If you have previously applied for Free School Meals via the WSCC website and your details remain the same, you do not need to do anything else at the moment.

If you have not previously applied, even if your child is currently receiving free meals in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, please apply by visiting [Free school meals - West Sussex County Council](#)

Worship Spot

The theme for this half term's in school worship is Endurance and Courage. The children will learn all about how to face challenges and persevere as well as how to support others. We will also be looking at key characters from the Old Testament!

Whilst Rev Carl is on sabbatical, we will continue to have Church on Tuesday mornings at 9am as usual with Phil Hawksley leading.

Remember that all are invited to our lovely Church services. Our new Bluebells will be joining in a few weeks once they've settled into life at St. Mark's.

PE Days

Please find the days each class does PE below. We try to stick to these days but they may change if there are other special events or trips happening:

Bluebell - Mondays and Thursdays

Fern - Monday and Fridays

Bramble - Wednesdays and swimming on Thursdays

Laurel - Monday and Fridays

Appropriate clothing

We know it's still lovely and warm at the moment but please don't forget to check the weather forecast and send children in with a rain coat if there is a chance of rain as we still go out to play if it is raining lightly.

Parents/carers Consultations

Parents/carers consultations are coming up on **Monday 19th** and **Thursday 22nd October** to see your child/ren class teacher. Appointments to speak to our Inclusion Lead, Martha Button, telephone appointments will be from 8am on **Wednesday 21st October**. Bookings open on MCAS from 3pm today.