



St Thomas CE (vc) Primary School Newsletter



Spring 1
Week 2
12.1.24

Diary Dates

- Monday 8th January- Start of Term
- Friday 2nd February NSPCC Numbers Day
- Friday 9th February- End of term
- Monday 19th February- INSET Day- children not in school
- Tuesday 20th February – Start of Spring 2

Acting Head Message



Good afternoon to all of you,

Firstly, I would like to apologise with the dates mix up in last week's newsletter- I have put the month of February back into the St Thomas calendar!

The children have all been busily getting on in their classrooms this week, and have enjoyed getting to grips with the new topic areas for this term. Hopefully you will have all now received your class newsletters explaining to you all about what your child/ren will be learning and hopefully you will see the wide variety of topic areas we cover. In the interests of transparency and so you as parents can see what we are working hard to ensure we move the school to Ofsted 'good' or better grade, I will begin to share with you some snippets of changes in systems, people and procedures over the course of the next few weeks.

This half-term, you will also begin to see Mrs Meade spending some more time in and around school. It was lovely to see her this week and I know the children were all happy and excited to see her back in the building. Her return will be phased over the half-term- I will keep you updated when our own roles will revert back.

Thank you for all your support and have an enjoyable weekend.

Mrs Goddard

#teamthomas

Collective Worship



In Collective Worship this week we celebrated the classes who were noticed for their smart, sensible and silent lining up and walking around school- well done to 5JF, 5S, 1M and 4A who were all picked for impressing.

We also read the story of Alex and the lion pit and how he believed God would help him, and thought about how he was brave even if he was the odd one out. We looked at our voted for school challenge this week- making the dining room a nice place for all. We will find out on Monday which classes and children were spotted doing this

'From Tiny Seeds Grow Mighty Trees'



FOST requests and information







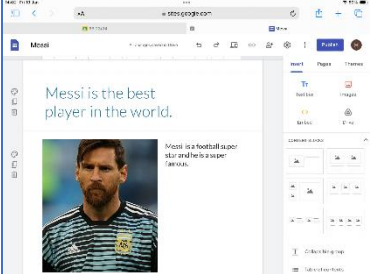
Please keep checking for communication from FOST about their next events.

Reception



This week in reception we have been learning all about how people have travelled to the moon in space rockets. We have enjoyed making our very own space rockets and moon pictures. We also have had a special visitor this week Rev. Ian who came to share with us the story of Jesus' calming the storm.



Year 1		Year 1 have been looking at place value to 20 this week. We have been looking at teen numbers and have used tens frames to help us. Some children took their maths outside on Thursday.
Year 2	This week we have been looking at road safety in PSHE. We discussed what we already know about crossing the road and talked a lot about when it is safe and unsafe to cross. We learnt the Green Cross Code and then we went outside to practice it.	
Year 3		In art this week, Year 3 have been using the hatching technique to sketch images of ammonites. The children also had the opportunity to observe some real ammonite fossils that Mrs Tabssum brought in to show them.
Year 4	In science, Year 4 have been learning about solids, liquids and gases. This week we looked at melting, freezing, evaporating and condensing. We held chocolate buttons in our hands and watched them melting from solids to liquids. We then enjoyed getting rid of the evidence!	
Year 5	 The Year Fives embraced the cold and spent a morning at the local allotment (Woodscape, in Dyson Woods). It was bitterly cold however the children had a fabulous time and were so well behaved. They also created their own mini-allotments in class, to care for and hopefully reap their rewards as the weeks pass. We hope to adopt part of the allotment and will consider an after school club whereby children can take turns going and caring for their own allotment space in Woodscape.	
Year 6		Year 6 have using Google Classroom to begin creating their own website pages and contents. This was a really interesting lesson that the pupils excelled in. We are looking forward to seeing where this scheme of work takes us.
Attendance We continue to monitor attendance and we are identifying persistent absentees. (less than 90%) We are keenly aware that there may be genuine and compelling reasons for pupil absence and the monitoring involves working with families to remove barriers and support pupils in their school attendance		

Attendance Matters



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

BULLYING

Unkind comments or images which are purposely aimed at an individual can be shared freely in a group chat – allowing and often encouraging others to join in the bullying behaviour. If this content is shared in a group of their peers (especially a larger group), it serves to amplify the hurt, embarrassment, anxiety and isolation that the victim feels.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: starting a new group, for instance, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one child doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss or share images from an event that everyone else but them attended.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by your child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some chat apps have a disappearing message function, so your child may be unable to report something they've seen because it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

SHARING GROUP CONTENT

It's important to remember that – while the content of the chat is private between those in the group – individual users can easily share a message, photo or video with others outside of the group or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something your child intended as private becoming public (and potentially going viral) is higher if there are people they don't know well in the group.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely your child will be communicating with people they don't really know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly toward your child. It's wise for young people not to share personal details and stay aware that they have no control over the messages and images they share after they've put them online.

NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications. Every time someone in the group messages, your child's device will be 'pinged' with an alert: potentially, this could mean hundreds of notifications a day. Not only is this highly distracting, but young people's fear of missing out on the latest conversation results in increased screen time as they try to keep up with the chat.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats are often an arena for young people to gain social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse, which could upset others in the group. Encourage your child to consider how other people might feel if they engaged in this behaviour. If your child does upset a member of their group chat, support them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Discuss the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they lose control of where it may end up and how it might be used.

GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Remind your child that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded in a group chat, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their hurt feelings and help to put them back in control by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. On a related note, you could also empower your child to speak up if they're in a chat where others are being picked on.

AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their true identity to gain a child's trust – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure your child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and, especially, to never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If your child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block the users sending the material, report them to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could be putting a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise to your child that it's OK for them to simply leave any group chat that they don't feel comfortable being a part of.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a phone or tablet bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be a massive irritation and distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to your child that they can still be part of the group chat, but that it would be healthier for them to turn off or mute the notifications and catch up with the conversation at a time which better suits them.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing Internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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