Newsletter 2

Dear Parents and Carers,

The children and staff are well and truly settled in to school life again now. Children have adjusted well to their new classrooms and teachers through the school, and our new Reception children have all been absolutely delightful to get to know over their first seven school days with us. We can already tell that they will all be great assets to the school in the months and years to come!

Thank you to everyone who has already read with children at home, we feel this is the most important thing families can do to help their children, please make it part of your daily routine.

**A few reminders at the start of the school year**

* Like most schools, we are a **Nut Free Zone** for the safety of children and staff with nut allergies. Please do not pack any nuts in packed lunches or use spreads such as Nutella in sandwiches.
* Please arrive by 8.45am if you want to see your child right to the door, to give yourself time to leave the site by 8.50am when the gates are shut. As children get used to their new classroom they can go down on their own, saying goodbye at the top of school.
* Please don’t send in squash to drink through the day, water only. We all know how bad it is for the teeth to have a constant sugar attack through the day. At snack time, children are only allowed fruit.
* Long hair must be tied back at all times in school for safety reasons.
* Please let the school office know by email or phone if someone else is picking up your child at the end of the day. Teachers are not expected to monitor their emails during the school day.

**Tea Time Church at St. James’** **– A message from Nikki Hall**

I’ve been going along to Tea Time church for a number of months, it’s great for families and we would love more people to know about it. We meet once a month, start off with a cup of tea and a bite to eat and then join together for worship, prayer and a short talk. During this, there is always a craft activity for anyone who wants to participate. This service tries to enable all ages to worship together.  You are very welcome whether or not you come with children.

If you find you are busy on a Sunday morning because of sport or family  commitments, then an afternoon service is perfect for you.  As parents  of children from Abbey school, then St. James’ is your local church and we would love you to join us. Next service is **Sunday 21st September 4pm**.  We are also starting a monthly prayer meeting - Friday 19th September 9am at St. James - Nikki Hall (Annabelle’s Mum year 5)

**Applications for secondary school and starting primary school in September 2026**

Please see the attached information and remind friends and family to apply in good time. The secondary school date is coming along very soon! It is very important that these applications are received by these dates. You stand a much greater chance of securing a place in one of your preferred schools if you apply on time!

For Secondary school starters in September 2026 (current Year 6 class), the closing date for **on time** applications is the 31 October 2025.

For Primary School starters in September 2026, the closing date for **on time** applications is the 15 January 2026.

**Christmas Shoebox Appeal 2025**

We are taking part in the Christmas shoe box appeal again this year. It’s a wonderful thing to do with your children. Details of what can be put in the boxes can be found here:

<http://www.wessexrotaryshoebox.org.uk/>

Please could you let us know if you would like to take part by filling in this quick form:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=JL1ZvEsvOUSih0_sDC0CtWpXICym8w1NoiYCXomrRuhUNkVZTFNFS0lQRjVYVFZNNDBPQUJYM0dKSC4u>

 We need to have the shoeboxes ready for collection by Friday 17th October.

**Singing opportunity for children in Y5 and 6**

We have been contacted by the Gillingham Singers to see if some of our children in Year 5 and 6 would like to be involved in a concert they are putting on in St James Church on November 22nd. If interested, the children would attend some rehearsals at Wyke School at 7pm on Mondays for 30 minutes or so to get ready to sing part of *On Christmas Night*with the adult choir at the concert. Parents and carers would be welcome to stay and watch these rehearsals. On the concert day there would be a rehearsal in the church in the afternoon before the concert at 7.30pm. Please email the school office if you’d like your child to take part, we will then pass your email on to the organiser to make further arrangements.

**Our School Governors – who are they and what do they do?**

A school governor's role in a maintained school is to oversee the school's strategy and performance by setting the vision, holding the headteacher accountable for educational outcomes, and ensuring financial resources are well-managed. Governors, who are volunteers, work as a governing board to ensure high standards of achievement and effective management. Key responsibilities include adopting policies, reviewing progress, and bringing diverse skills from their professional lives to benefit the school.

We have a brilliant group of 11 highly effective and knowledgeable Governors and a great clerk,  who make up our board. We have space for one more Foundation governor if you know someone who would like to join the board, see application letter attached.

Our current governors are:

Antony Streets – Chair

Karen Ralph – Vice-Chair

Margaret Derrett

Tim Hall

Ron Pritchard

Vicki Wonnacott

Lorna Eguiazabal

Lucy Jones

Jenny Duncombe

Shane Shortman

Michael Salisbury

Karen Hudson (Clerk to governors)

**Vaccinations**

We know that families have a range of views about vaccinations for their children, but as a school we are always keen for vaccinations to be part of the control of illness for our children and therefore good attendance in school. You will be notified of school-based vaccinations in good time, including the new Chickenpox programme which starts in 2026.

**Forest School – Tuesday afternoons**

Our Forest School day has changed to Tuesdays for the year ahead. It will be Year 3 again this week , followed by Year 4 from 30th September then Reception from 21st October.

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.

**Welcome Service in St James Church for our Reception families – Wednesday 24th 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.

**Harvest Festival – 1st October in St James Church**

We will be taking the whole school to St James Church on Wednesday 1st October to hold our Harvest Festival in our beautiful church with our Vicar and Stories From the Bible group. We absolutely fill the church, so are unable to accommodate families at this service. Please could you send your children to school with an offering to bring up to the front during the service. Please send them with something that would be donated to a food bank so that we can pass it on after the service.

**Parking**

It does get really busy around the school entrance at peak times, we love it when families park a little further away and walk the last part to school. It’s a really healthy start to the day for adults and children to do this. Parking in the road outside the front of school blocks the traffic for other road users and families. Please avoid parking in this area.

It is not possible to drive on to the site to park unless you have a blue badge or have applied to the school for a permit, which we issue in exceptional circumstances.

**Attendance**

Good attendance and punctuality remain a top priority for us this academic year. This is because regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

We work hard to ensure that your child is supported in school to feel safe, to be the best they can be, and to develop a sense of belonging both with their peers and as part of their wider school community. Regular attendance really does matter.

As a parent it is your responsibility that your child attends school each day. We recognise that at times some children and young people can find attending school less easy than others. We are here to help. If your child is experiencing difficulties, please do get in touch as soon as you can. We welcome you taking the lead on starting conversations at any point about supporting your child as we want what is best for them too.

As parents/carers you can best support your children to secure regular attendance and punctuality by:

* Ensuring they arrive at school on time every day by 8.50am at the latest. The gate shuts at that time so please come in time to deliver them to the classroom door and be out of the gate by 8.50am.
* Arranging dental and medical appointments outside of school hours where possible
* Informing the school if your child is too unwell to attend. (To assist you in deciding whether your child is too ill to attend school, the NHS have produced a weblink you mind find useful: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS ([www.nhs.uk))](http://www.nhs.uk/)
* Taking holidays during school holiday periods only. Fines are issued by Dorset Council for holidays in term time.
* Attending parents’ evenings and school events
* Discussing any problems or difficulties with the school as soon as they arise – staff are here to help

Our attendance policy is available to read on our school website. This explains how we monitor attendance and follow up absence. If you have any difficulties accessing our policy, please let us know so that we can provide it in an alternative format.

Thank you for working with us and continuing to support us in maximising your child’s attendance to help their learning, well-being and future success.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

**Drum lessons**

Our drum teacher has asked us to let you know that he has spaces available this term if any of your children our interested in taking up drums? Please email the office for his contact details if you'd like to know more.

**Road Closure – 22nd September**

We’ve been informed that St James St will be closed from 9.30am-3.30pm on Monday 22nd September.

Michael Salisbury, Head teacher

**TERM DATES 2025 – 2026**

**Autumn Term**

**INSET DAY                                                     Wednesday 3rd September 2025**

Children start back                                       Thursday 4th September 2025

Autumn Half Term                                        Monday 27th October – Friday 31st October 2025

Autumn Term ends                                      Friday 19th December 2025

Christmas Holidays                                       Monday 22nd December 2025 – Friday 2nd January 2026

**Spring Term**

**INSET DAY                                                     Monday 5th January 2026**

Children start back                                       Tuesday 6th January 2026

Spring half term                                            Monday 16th February to Friday 20th February 2026

Spring Term ends                                         Friday 27th March 2026

Easter holidays                                             Monday 30th March to Friday 10th April 2026

**Summer Term**

**INSET DAY                                                     Monday 13th April 2026**

Children start back                                       Tuesday 14th April 2026

MAY DAY Bank Holiday                                Monday 4th May 2026

**INSET DAY                                                      Friday 22nd May 2026**

Summer half term                                         Monday 25th May to Friday 29th May 2026

Summer Term ends                                       Tuesday 21st July 2026

**INSET DAY                                                       Wednesday 22nd July 2026**