



# ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) FIRST SCHOOL

"Together we will give our children  
the roots to grow, and the wings to fly"

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**Headteacher: Mrs Claire Marsland**

26<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

Further to our communications two weeks ago, we, along with all other schools in the area, have been instructed by Somerset Public Health to continue with our enhanced control measures until the end of term. A reminder of the guidance issued to us by Somerset is included with this letter.

In response to the advice given, we have come to the decision that we are unable to have Christmas performances in the hall with a live audience. However, as you will read below, we are hoping to welcome parents on site one year group at a time, for an open air performance of that year group's Christmas songs. We are aware that other schools in Frome may take a different approach. Each individual school must undertake thorough risk assessments and take the decisions that are right for their school and their site. I am sure you can appreciate that our school site is not very COVID friendly in terms of space.

We have also made the decision that we are unable to have all parents on site at the same time for a Christmas fundraising or social event. However, as you will see below, the school and Friends of St John's have planned a number of events for your children to enjoy in the run up to the end of term.

My priority remains, as it has done throughout the pandemic, to protect the whole school community as best as I can. Christmas events in school are important to the school community. However, I believe it is even more important, that children, parents and staff have the opportunity to spend Christmas with their families; that is now what needs to be safeguarded as best we can.

## **Christmas Nativity**

All of our year groups have been extremely busy practising their Christmas songs for our Christmas Nativity. We have some very excitable animals in Reception, angelic children in Year 1, Year 2 are of course all absolute stars, Year 3 are sharing good news and shepherding their sheep and Year 4 are being very wise!

Each year group have been practising their part of the story in their year groups and will be filmed in their year groups. They have also been practising some whole school carols in their year groups, but we will come together to film those. Mr Coombs will then work his usual magic for us to produce a complete whole school Nativity, which will be on our website by the end of term.

As well as our film, I am also in discussions with the church to see if we can come together as a whole school in church to perform our Nativity on the last day of term. Unfortunately, we would not be able to invite parents as the children will fill the church with the spaces we will need to put in place in between each year group. However, I am hoping we may be able to livestream the Nativity to you. When I have confirmation from the church as to exactly what we can do I will update you further.

I know that you would love to also hear the children sing live, so we are going to organise for each year group to perform a couple of their Christmas songs from under the Year 1 outdoor play area at the end of the day during the last week of term. This will involve us having to adapt, change or tweak end of school timings. It is most likely that Year 4 will be Monday, Year 3 Tuesday and so on working down the school to Reception on Friday. It is most likely that we will do early leaving, probably 14.45 for the year group that are singing so that we can clear the front

playground of parents before opening the gates for the rest of the school collecting. Again, as soon as the exact details are confirmed, including the risk assessment and measures we will be putting in place for this to happen, we will update you further.

### **Christmas Lunch**

Christmas lunch will be offered in the same way as last year, over two days. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will have theirs on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December and Years 3 and 4 will have theirs on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December. The lunch is free for Years R, 1 and 2 and those eligible for free school meals in Years 3 and 4. The cost for Years 3 and 4 is £2.60.

Please complete the Christmas lunch booking form on ParentMail by no later than Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December. If you do not book a Christmas lunch for your child, please make sure you send in a packed lunch. They will still join in the festivities and eat in the hall with the rest of their class.

To be able to offer a Christmas lunch to the whole school, children in Years R, 1 and 2 who normally receive a hot lunch will receive a packed lunch provided by school on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December. Children in Years 3 and 4 who normally receive a hot lunch will receive a packed lunch provided by the school on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December.

### **Party Days**

On the day your child has their Christmas lunch, so Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December for Years 3 and Year 4, their class will also be having a Christmas celebration day.

Your child may come to school on that day in non-uniform; this may be a Christmas or party-themed outfit, or just casual clothes. Please ensure that whatever your child is wearing, they will be warm enough, especially outside at playtimes, also that their outfit is suitable for craft activities, party games and running around, and lastly that they can manage their outfit easily independently to go to the toilet! There is no charge for this non-uniform day.

During their Christmas celebration day teachers have planned Christmas craft activities and games. Each class or year group have got a hall time booked so that they also have more space for party games and dancing.

### **Christmas Cards and Post Boxes**

Each classroom will have its own post box for Christmas cards. Post boxes will be in classrooms from Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December until Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, they will be removed from classrooms to quarantine. They will be handed out on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December. Please ensure that the recipient's name is clearly written on the envelope.

If children wish to send a card to a child or staff member who is not based in their classroom, they will need to post those cards in the central post box next to Mrs Alexander. Please ensure for children in other classes, that their name and their class name is on the envelope.

### **House Captain's Children's Raffle**

My dear friend, Veronica, has again very kindly knitted toys for the House Captains to raffle. This information is also included in their section of the School Newsletter.

Tickets cost £1 and are restricted to one per child. They can be purchased through ParentMail. Tickets must be purchased by 9.00am on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December and the winning tickets will be selected on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December

### **Friends of St John's**

Roll up, roll up!

The Friends of St John's have organised a virtual Christmas raffle. Enter the virtual raffle to be in with a chance of winning some Christmas goodies for all the family.

- 1st prize - Christmas Foodie Hamper worth £75

- Various runner up prizes including vouchers from Postscript, an artist bundle, vouchers for Palette and Pasture, a puzzle and dinosaur book donated by parents

Tickets cost £1 each (or buy 6 for £5) and can be purchased through ParentMail. Why not see if any friends and family would like you to purchase a ticket on their behalf?

Tickets must be purchased by 9.00am on Wednesday 15th December and the winning ticket will be selected on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December.

The Friends are also planning a Christmas activity to take place on the same day as the singing performances. Again, exactly how this will work on the actual day, we will confirm in due course. In order to run this event, we will need volunteers on the day. We will let you know next week how you can volunteer some time.

### Finally...

Please remember, the School is a community and everyone attending events is there to enjoy the same activity. Protect and respect everyone to allow events like this to continue. By agreeing to partake is also agreeing to look after each other, **respecting** the need to wear a face covering, **testing** before and after the event, and not attending if unwell or symptomatic.

We are fully committed to giving your children the best possible end of term, Christmas experience possible, and are fully committed to each of the events outlined on this letter taking place. However, it is entirely possible that we may be forced to make changes at short notice if we have an outbreak. If this does occur, we will have contingency plans in place, so that the children do not miss out.

As always, thank you for your patience, understanding and support.

Yours faithfully,

Claire Marsland

### Christmas Diary Dates

Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> December	Deadline to order Christmas lunch on ParentMail
Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> – Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas card posting dates
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas singing and Friends of SJ craft events – Year 4
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> December	Non-uniform and Christmas celebration for Years R, 1 and 2 Christmas lunch for Years R, 1 and 2 Christmas singing and Friends of SJ craft events – Year 3 Deadline to purchase House Captains' knitted toy raffle tickets
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> December	Non-uniform and Christmas celebration for Years 3 and 4 Christmas lunch for Years 3 and 4 Christmas singing and Friends of SJ craft events – Year 2 Deadline to purchase Friends of SJ raffle tickets House Captains' raffle prize draw
Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas singing and Friends of SJ craft events – Year 1 Friends of SJ raffle prize draw
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas cards handed out Christmas singing and Friends of SJ craft events – Year R End of term
Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	INSET day – school closed
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> January	First day of term