



December 2020

Dear Parents/carers

With only a matter of weeks remaining this term this is a good opportunity to reflect on how much has been achieved in such a short space of time. After school closures last academic year, thankfully all children have been able to return to school despite the Covid pandemic continuing and another national lockdown. Children have adapted BRILLIANTLY to the new arrangements and systems at school and I have been delighted to see so many have returned with great attitudes to learning. Children who have been in isolation have had access to remote learning through Google classroom and this has helped them to keep up to date as much as possible when absent from school. I would like to thank the St Alban's staff for their hard work and dedication at this very difficult time in trying to manage a raft of regulations and requirements that make day to day activities and operations far harder than anyone could ever imagine, whilst also trying to help children to catch up on lost learning. Thank you also to parents and carers for helping us to be as Covid-secure as possible at pick up and drop off times and in communicating with us via email/telephone.

When can we return to 'normal'?

I am sure many of you will have heard the expression 'new normal'. This is now the reality for many people and schools are no different, operating under extreme circumstances. At the time of writing we are still in a national lockdown with a stringent 'tier' system due to begin and many people having lost their lives, livelihoods and suffering greatly due to the effects of the pandemic. We have reduced staffing numbers due to Covid related absences and the team are going above and beyond to ensure that the school can remain open to pupils in a manner that also prevents the transmission of Covid-19 – perhaps one of the greatest challenges we have ever faced in our profession. Staff are also themselves concerned for their own safety and that of their vulnerable family members. Therefore, we are not in a position yet to be able to return to 'normal'.

I am aware that there has been some disappointment recently regarding some aspects of school life that we are unable to offer/provide in the same way as we did in previous years, in particular how we have had to adapt lunchtime arrangements and Christmas activities. This is the result of a number of factors including Covid restrictions for schools preventing 'bubbles' from mixing on site, staff absences reducing what can be achieved, the layout and arrangement of the building which prevents the safe transport of meals, and so on. Please be reassured that we are all aiming to return to 'normal' as soon as it is safe to do so and that our arrangements are very much in line with those in other schools who are facing similar difficulties and restrictions. (For example, some parents may be surprised to learn that only 14% schools in the East District area are in the fortunate position of being able to provide a hot dinner in the same way as before, with the remainder offering picnic style lunch boxes). School Food Standards are still being met by schools who are unavoidably having to offer a picnic style boxed lunches and children appear to be really enjoying their meals at school.

Please be reassured that the compromises that have to be made by all members of our school community in order to keep children in school during a pandemic are short-term and designed to keep children, parents and wider families and staff members safe from an extremely dangerous virus and the risks associated to the NHS if it were to be overwhelmed.

Parents evenings telephone calls

Thank you to all teachers and parents/carers following this years 'telephone call' parent evenings. Though we would all have preferred to have our usual face to face parent meetings, overall, we felt it worked well and we hope that you found the sessions informative and supportive.



Inspired to make a difference in God's world with excellence and love



Applications for Year R September 2021 entry

If you have a child born between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017, they will be eligible to start school in the school year beginning September 2021. Applications are now open through the Hampshire County Council website at www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions.

The closing date for applications is **15th January 2021 (midnight)**. Parents will be notified by Hampshire County Council of a school place on 16th April 2021 (typically by email unless you have submitted a paper application instead of doing this online, in which case you will be informed by letter).

Please remember, if you would like to apply under the faith criteria (linked to church attendance), **you must also complete a school 'supplementary information form'** and return to the school by the deadline of 15th January 2021. These are available on our website [only](#); if you have difficulty downloading this form, please ask for a copy from the school office. Our admissions policy is also available on our website.

Note the following Admission policy variation for 2021 Admissions for those who apply under the faith criteria: ***In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church [Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Portsdown Community Church (The Beacon), Salvation Army, United Reformed Church, Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Denvilles Ecumenical Church (DEC), Evangelical Alliance members] has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these [admissions] arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship***".

NEW virtual video tour – Year R admissions 2021

As advised by Public Health England we are regrettably unable to run tours or visits for prospective new parents/carers due to the high risk of coronavirus transmission that these would pose. However, we are pleased to share with our school community a 'virtual video tour' to help give everyone the opportunity to see St Alban's Primary School and show you what we can offer prospective parents/carers and their children who may be interested in applying for a place in Year R starting in September 2021.

Please visit our website <https://www.stalbansprimaryschool.co.uk/> for more information and click on the 'Admissions September 2021 please watch our Virtual Video Tour' link from the home page to see our new virtual video. Further information can also be found under the 'Starting School' tab from the home page. If you have any questions or what to find our more, please email admin@st-albans.hants.sch.uk or call 023 9248 2072.

Hampshire access to food survey ([external message](#))

As your school caterer we would like to better understand how Covid-19 has changed your school community's access to food in your local area. Your parents' opinions are important to help as part of local government, identify and gaps and continue to strategically plan for the future to best serve local communities. We would appreciate it if you could cascade the survey and share the link below with your parents via all your communication platforms. For those parents who kindly completed the survey earlier in the year, please encourage them to complete this again to help us analyse changes and trends. The survey should take approximately 7 - 10 minutes to complete.

<https://ccbshampshirecc.researchfeedback.net/o4icm8>

Staffing update

Please welcome to our school community Mrs C Smith, Learning Support Assistant who is working with Ms Pangbourne in Year 6. We have a programme of additional support and interventions planned for the spring and summer term and need additional teaching staff to help us to enable this to happen. Mrs Woolf, a very experienced teacher, will be joining the school in January. We also welcome a new lunch supervisor, Mrs Halsey, to the team. We still have vacancies for lunch supervisors. If you know of someone who may be interested, please could you ask them to email the school for more information and an application form.

Essential items in school only

Please be reminded that pupils must only bring into school essential items - no overnight bags for example. May we also remind parents that 'treats' from home cannot be distributed to others at school (i.e. for a birthday celebration).

Fundraising success

We are extremely proud of the recent success stories for fundraising the school community has achieved, well done to everyone – see below the results of our joint efforts.



St Albans raised a total of £82.46 for the Poppy Appeal and so far with Havant and Emsworth area collections combined have raised almost £18,000!

We raised £158.00 on non-uniform day for Children in Need.



Rotary Shoebox Scheme

"Spreading a Little Happiness"

'Thank you to all at St Albans school who helped with the shoeboxes this year, you supplied 60 shoeboxes. So once again a very big THANK YOU from Havant Rotary'.

Next fundraising event:



We are celebrating Christmas Jumper Day on Monday 14 December 2020 at our school (to tie in with our class parties) – all proceeds to 'Save the Children'

To help raise money for this good cause, all pupils are being asked to wear a Christmas jumper (to be worn over normal school uniform).

We are asking please for a minimum donation of £1.00 per child towards 'Save the Children' (*you are welcome to add more funds in the 'Enter Payment Amount' box*) and this must be paid via the Online Scopay system (www.scopay.com). Please do not bring cash into school. The online Scopay system is now live for you to donate ahead of time under 'Trips and Events' – 'Xmas Jumper Save the Children 2020'.

Christmas events and activities during the Covid pandemic

Below you will find details of the adapted Christmas events and activities that will be taking place this year. Please could I ask parents to understand the extreme circumstances in which we are currently operating and know that we are providing as much as we are able to in order to help children to celebrate and enjoy this very special time of the year.

Lunch and class Christmas parties – Monday 14 December

We have decided to move Christmas Jumper Day to Monday 14 December (national day is Friday 11 December) to coincide with our other Christmas celebrations for the day.

HC3S are offering a Christmas lunch menu (separate letter has been issued) and parents/carers **MUST OPT OUT** of a school lunch and inform the school by Friday 4 December 12:00noon if they do not wish their child to have one.

Class Christmas parties will also be taking place in the afternoon of Monday 14 December within each class bubble – more details to follow.

Christmas cards in school

If children would like to give Christmas cards to their fellow classmates, they will be allowed to do this within their own bubble to avoid the risks of COVID-19 transmission.

For those children who wish to share Christmas greetings with members of other bubbles, we are going to have a virtual alternative using Purple Mash. Instructions on how to create and share these virtual greetings will be sent to you very soon.

HSA Christmas card design & tea towel self-portraits

Thank you and well done to all those pupils who submitted an artwork design for the HSA. The HSA team are working hard on all the orders received and soon we will announce the date when orders can be collected from the school playgrounds – details to follow.

Father Christmas visit

Unfortunately Father Christmas will be unable to come into the school building when children are present as he did last year. However, Father Christmas knows how hard the children have been working at school and knows about the many times they have been kind and considerate to others so is planning to deliver something special to each class in the final week of this term (we are setting secret cameras up in school to video capture Father Christmas doing this and will share this footage in class with the children...we are hoping he isn't shy!!)

New parent communication – February 2021

We are very pleased to announce that we are changing our parent communication system (emails) to a new provider from February 2021. We are changing from Teachers2Parents to a company called ParentMail which has received excellent reviews from many schools/parents across the country. More information will be announced in January 2021 to help all our parents with the on-boarding procedures. In the meantime, please feel free to look at ParentMail online and see what they offer: <https://www.parentmail.co.uk/>  ParentMail

Review of consent forms – Years 1-6

ParentMail offers an 'online form' facility where parents can consent directly online, including being able to update records and consents such as 'image/photo', 'food tasting' and 'sting relief'. Therefore the planned review of parental consents will be delayed until ParentMail is in operation.

Governor news

Welcome to our Governing body update section, this will be a regular section to keep parents informed regarding the activities of the school's Governing body. As Governors we strive to uphold our mission, "Inspired to make a difference in God's world with excellence and love".

It's been a difficult year and we wanted to begin by paying tribute and thanking all our St Alban's staff who have just been incredible throughout this whole period. We would also like to thank parents and carers for their continued support. I'd personally like to thank all of my fellow governors who have continued to meet virtually during the Covid-19 period to support the school.

This term we are pleased to welcome a new Foundation Governor, Nicky Quick. At present we have a vacancy for one further Foundation Governor. Details of this role can be found at https://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/documents/foundation-governors_application-process-details/. If you consider that you have the skills to fill this role please contact the school office.

You may recall the Governor's letter sent out earlier this term. We would like to express our sincere thanks to all those parents and carers who make voluntary contributions. Many schools have a Governors voluntary fund which has helped raise much needed money to improve the quality of provision for all pupils. As I'm sure you're aware, this fund is more important than ever during the current Covid-19 situation to support our school. If you are not currently making a contribution, and you'd like to, the school and governors would be hugely grateful. Please ask the school office for a letter with further details as well as a Gift Aid Declaration form. Thank you.

We have seen a tremendous start to this academic year and it has been great to see all of the children returning to school. Governors have been working hard behind the scenes to ensure that the school is always striving to be the best it can.

This term the Headteacher's Performance Management Team, Pay Committee, Resources Committee, Standard's Committee and Admissions have all met along with the Full Governing Body to discuss a range of issues; which included:

- Headteacher's report, this is where the Headteacher provides an update for the term and Governors raise questions to both challenge and support.
- 2020/21 Financial budget and school spending.
- Recovery Curriculum and School Improvement Plan.
- Governor monitoring plans.

Finally, we would like to wish you peace, hope and joy at this very special festive time and for the year ahead. Happy Christmas to you all.

Tracey Smith, Chair of Governors
On Behalf of St Alban's Governing Body

Dinner money

Thank you to everyone for your efforts to ensure dinner money is paid and up to date, we really appreciate your efforts and we are very pleased with how well everyone is working with the school.

Please can we remind parents to ensure they have a credit on their child's Scopay account to cover school lunches. Reminder texts will be sent on a Friday if your debt has reached £10.00 or more. **If we do not receive payment we will ask that you provide a home packed lunch for your child until the debt is cleared.**

Term dates

- Last day of Autumn Term – Friday 18 December 2020 (the school day finishes at normal time)
- Christmas Holidays – School Closed Monday 21 December to Friday 1 January 2021
- INSET DAY – Monday 4 January 2021 SCHOOL CLOSED TO ALL PUPILS
- Start of Spring Term – Tuesday 5 January 2021
- Half term – School Closed Monday 15 February to Friday 19 February 2021
- INSET Day – Monday 22 February 2021 SCHOOL CLOSED TO ALL PUPILS

Events

- Friday 4 December– Whole school nasal flu immunisations
- Monday 14 December – Class Christmas parties, 'Christmas Lunch' Menu and Christmas Jumper Day (Save the Children)
- Monday 15 March 2021 - Individual school photos
- Friday 28 May 2021 - Class school photos
(Please note that these events could be subject to change)

Thank you again for your patience and understanding as we operate in extreme times. I hope you all have a very blessed and happy Christmas and New Year.

With best wishes,

Mrs Hordell
Headteacher