



Newsletter
4th September 2020



Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, I would like to wish you a very warm welcome back to school. It has been wonderful to see so many of the children back in for the first two days of term. Most classes had nearly 100% attendance, and this is so encouraging to see.

As is always the case at the beginning of the academic year, there is much to communicate with you, but even more so in these unusual times, given the changes to routines that we were used to.

Dates

Attached to this newsletter is a calendar for the academic year. You will have received this last year, but we have made one change. **The INSET day on Monday 12th April 2021 has been moved to Thursday 6th May 2021.** Staff will be in school for training, but the school will be closed to pupils on that date, as the school will be used as a polling station.

In addition to this, you will receive the parent calendar next Friday with key dates for the academic year.

New routines

As we all adjust to the new routines and procedures in place to keep us all safe, I would like to clarify some points around day-to-day practicalities.

Firstly, I would like to reiterate the importance of dropping off and collecting your child at the correct time. We have staggered the start and finish times of the school day in order to manage the number of people in a particular area at any one time. This is in place to minimise risk to any member of our school community, and punctuality is critical in avoiding the crossover of bubbles, and overcrowding. We are unable to run the late club at the moment, because of the protective measures of the bubbles which are in place. We would ask that any parent who anticipates that they may be delayed in collecting their child ring the school as soon as possible.

In the case of adverse weather at drop-off or pick-up times, I am afraid that we will be unable to wait in the hall or inside the school foyer for the time being. Again, this is to avoid overcrowding, particularly in small indoor spaces.

Our water fountains are currently not in use, so please ensure that you provide your child with a water bottle, with their name on, if you have not already done so.

Lastly, to avoid visitors to the office, and the potential handling of cash, we will not currently be selling school uniform at the office. Children are able to wear plain navy and white uniform items, which are available for purchase at supermarkets and other stores. Thank you for your understanding and co-operation with this.

Homework

For children in years 1 to 6, weekly homework will resume next week. I wanted to take this opportunity to clarify how homework will be set.

We will continue to follow our model of core, optional and half-termly project homework.

- The **core homework** will continue to be daily reading, spellings and number practice (typically times tables practice, but this may vary if necessary). Your child's teacher will send these out for the half term ahead, but they can be practised on a week-by-week basis, in preparation for any tests they may have for them. Spelling tests will be done on sheets, marked and then sent home with your child.
- **Optional homework** must be requested by parents on a half-termly basis. Optional homework will comprise of a maths and a grammar worksheet, linked to the work that children have been doing in class. Parents will be asked to sign up for optional homework, using a slip which is at the bottom of the spellings and times tables list. This will be marked and returned to your child if it is submitted by the deadline.
- **Project homework** will be set as a creative project to work on over the half term, linked to your child's learning in school. This is likely to have either a 2D or 3D outcome, which will be celebrated and displayed in school. We have seen many wonderful creations over the years, and children feel such a sense of pride over them, so we strongly encourage supporting your child with their project homework.
- Optional homework will be set on Teams, which children used with great success during the lockdown period. If you do not have access to a computer, then please speak to your child's teacher, who will be able to provide you with a paper copy.

Optional homework will be set every Wednesday, with the expectation that it is submitted by the following Monday. It will be returned by the Wednesday, along with the next set of homework. Your child will receive their spelling and times tables list for the half term, along with the half termly project description on Wednesday 9th September. This will also have the slip attached for parents to return, should they wish for their child to receive the weekly optional homework. The first set of optional homework will therefore be given out the following Wednesday 16th September, once requests from parents have come back.

We do understand that parents may wish to request additional homework for their child. We do, however, have to be mindful of teacher's workloads, as they focus their energy on the planning, delivery and marking of quality daily lessons across multiple subjects. Therefore, teachers will be unable to provide additional homework for children. However, teachers will be happy to share any useful resources (such as books or websites) which might be helpful in supporting your child at home. Similarly, we will be publishing each year group's chronology on our website. This will give you a detailed overview of what your child will be learning across the curriculum for the half term.



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Before School Club

From Monday 14th September, our Before School Club will resume. It will continue to be run by Cathy, and her staff, from the dining hall. There will be some changes to how it will be run in order to meet Covid secure standards, and to protect the bubbles that children are in during the school day. Children will have to remain in the year group bubbles, so there will be stations set up for each year group that children will be directed towards. Unfortunately, at this stage, children will be unable to play with friends in other year groups.

A further difference is that parents will have to register for their child to attend for the half term. We are currently unable to accept children on a 'drop in' basis, as we have to carefully plan for the number of children attending. Parents will also be required to indicate the days of the week that they wish for their child to attend, with payment made in advance and with fees placed in an envelope. Attached to this newsletter is a registration form. We ask that you complete and return this form to the office (or via admin@st-lukes.towerhamlets.sch.uk) by Tuesday 8th September at 5pm. This will allow us to plan carefully for the numbers that we have. We hope to be able accommodate all requests, but we will have prioritise children of working parents and those in receipt of pupil premium, should numbers be too high, and therefore pose a risk to safety.

Energy Kidz

Finally, we anticipate that our after-school provision, managed by Energy Kidz, will resume on Monday 14th September. We are awaiting final arrangements with Energy Kidz, and I will update you as soon as we have everything confirmed with them.

Wishing you a lovely weekend.

With best wishes,

Cristina King
Head of School