

# Newsletter

## Weekly news at St Christopher's



Dear Parents,

Welcome back after the Christmas holiday. The children seem to have all returned with smiling faces, invigorated by holiday celebrations and eager to be at school! Likewise, I hope you all feel refreshed, renewed, and ready to start the calendar year with positive energy.

A new year often signals “New Year, New Me” plans, and we have been considering exciting ways to begin the new year at school. This week, in assembly, we pinpointed two things that we, as a whole school, are going to work on as our school New Year’s Resolutions: **uniform, and independence.**

The children know how important I think it is to look smart and presentable, and they tend to tuck their shirts in quickly if they see me coming! Uniform is important in schools for many reasons, not least because:

- It provides a level playing field and removes any deliberations about what to wear, allowing for greater group cohesion, and as a result, a clear message of equality. At our school, I made sure that we introduced trousers for girls, as this is an important part of this equality, showing that all children – regardless of gender, socioeconomic background, or otherwise – are all the same and come from the same starting point.
- It gives a sense of group identity, to feel part of something bigger than themselves. It helps children recognise the value of working together towards a common goal rather than focusing on their individual objectives.
- It encourages pupils to learn the importance of dressing for success. There is a school of thought which says it contributes to pupils having a positive attitude and behaviour in school. As pupils develop an association between their uniform and learning, simply putting on their uniform helps a child get into the right mindset, preparing them for a day of working hard and being focused.

Therefore, pupils should have the correct uniform on (this includes hair being tied back if it is shoulder length, and with the school colours for hairbands etc., as well as proper school shoes and not trainers), and always look tidy and presentable.



This is all the more important, as there are days when pupils are in sports kits all day, so, on the days they are wearing uniform, teachers will be on the lookout to find really good examples of wearing a uniform with pride and reward them with merits! Both Mrs Chamadia and Miss Rule as Head of Pre-Prep, Head and Prep respectively, will be writing to parents about our expectations.

Independence is our second focus. We are working on a number of things in school to promote and reward this, and we would like your help to continue this at home. Here are some simple things that the pupils came up with in assembly that they could do to become more independent at home:

- Take responsibility for packing their own bag for the next day;
- Manage their homework, as far as possible by themselves;
- Being responsible for their bedroom;
- Try to have a go at resolving their own conflicts: a huge part of being an independent adult is learning to deal with people and managing interactions and relationships with them;
- Make sure they are accountable for their actions.

We know that our pupils will make mistakes, and we must let this happen. It may seem counterintuitive at first, but this will teach them how to succeed in life. When they make a mistake, we must let them know it is OK, but also help them brainstorm how they might do better next time. This mind shift can guide anything from small mistakes, like choosing not to bring an umbrella when the forecast calls for rain, to larger ones, like not managing the homework as they decided to wait until the night before to do it. It's hard to see your child struggle, but in school we try to teach them that failure is just feedback, it helps develop a growth mindset, and with that mindset, they will be able to overcome any struggle confidently.

Before I sign off this week, a thank you to those who took the time to complete the Parent Survey. We will be looking at the outcomes over the next few weeks, and will be taking on board your feedback to look how we can be even better.

Have a restful weekend.

Mr Carter

**Head**

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### Pre-Prep

It has been fantastic to welcome the Pre-Prep children back to school after the Festive break and to hear all their news. We have an exciting term ahead of us, with class trips, author visits, workshops and more. We are also looking forward to starting a new term of ECHO clubs, giving the Pre-Prep children more opportunities to enhance their learning and try one of the different clubs on offer.

Mrs Chamadia

### Head of Pre-Prep



### Prep School

Happy New Year to you all and welcome back.

All the Prep School children have returned to their classes with enthusiasm, renewed energy and determination to have a happy and successful Spring Term.

We are looking forward to all the engaging topics, trips and workshops coming up this term as well as new and exciting ECHO clubs which will be starting next week.

This term, we are continuing to drive forward all of our Character Values with a real focus on independence. We are also encouraging children to take pride in their appearance and being responsible for their uniform.

St Christopher's are also delighted to begin our new PALS initiative between the Pre Prep and Prep school which will launch in the next few weeks.

We look forward to another wonderful Term.

Miss Rule

### Head of Prep

### Emailing teachers

**REMINDER:** ALL emails to teachers should use the



[mail@stchristophersthehall.org.uk](mailto:mail@stchristophersthehall.org.uk)

It is very likely that emails will not get to their destination if you email teachers directly.

### Languages Award

We are delighted to inform you that St Christopher's the Hall has successfully met the criteria for the British Council International School Award.

Mrs Dubeck submitted the application last term in order to help us gain recognition for the initiatives that we have put in place since the beginning of the academic year to raise the profile of languages across the School.

The assessor commented that our application, "...successfully met the criteria for the International



*al School Foundation Award. You have provided your pupils with some excellent opportunities to learn new languages, as well as learning aspects of the culture of other countries. You have also been celebrating the range of 'mother' languages that exist within your community".*

The award will now serve to give us direction for further projects to help us embed the

importance of respecting and embracing global citizenship.

Watch this space!

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### Guidance over illness

There are many nasty bugs and viruses around at the moment, so we thought it might be useful to give a guide to some of them, with symptoms and treatment. Please note that many of these are transmitted by droplet infection, so please remind your children about hand-washing, disposal of tissues and covering their nose/mouth when sneezing or coughing.

Any child with a viral or bacterial infection, a rash and a temperature **should not attend school**. Nor should they be sent to school if they are feeling poorly. If your child is diagnosed with Strep A, they should not return to School until 24 hours after their first dose of antibiotics. However, if they are still unwell after this, they should only return to School when they are well enough. We hope this information is useful.

### Meningitis

**Key facts:**

- There are several different groups of bacteria that cause me. The most common are meningococcal A, B, C, W and Y.
- Around 10% of people carry the bacteria with no symptoms, and for most people it causes no harm as they have natural resistance.
- I can be severe and even if treated, 1 in 5 people will suffer long-term complications such as brain damage, loss of hearing or vision and loss of limbs.
- Children aged 0-5 are at the highest risk, but there is a secondary peak of cases among teenagers and young adults.

**Who am I?**  
I can be caused by a virus or bacteria. The most common type of bacteria is *Neisseria meningitidis*.

**How do you catch me?**  
The bacteria that cause me are very common and live in the back of the nose and throat. I am passed from person to person by coughing, sneezing or by kissing someone who is infected. When the bacteria break through the protective lining of the nose and throat and enter the bloodstream and cross into the brain, I can make you very ill.

**How do you know it's me?** I can cause:

- Fever or shivering
- Severe headache
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Limb, joint, muscle pain, stiff neck
- Sensitivity to bright lights
- Rash or pale/mottled skin
- Sleepiness, confusion or even seizures

Symptoms can appear in any order, rash may not appear at all or may look different depending on your skin tone.

**What to do about me?**  
If you think you have me, do not wait for a rash to develop, seek immediate medical attention, as you will need urgent antibiotics. In severe infections, I can cause a person to be hospitalised. Close household contacts will usually be given antibiotics to kill the bacteria and help stop me from spreading to others.

**How to keep me away?**  
Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself against me. MenB and MenC vaccines are given to young people from 14-25 years. If you are starting school or university, check you are up to date with your meningitis vaccinations.

### Scarlet fever

**Key facts:**

- I usually appear in the Spring and commonly affect children aged 2-8 years.
- In rare cases I can invade a person's natural barrier, the skin, and enter the blood stream. This is called 'invasive Group A streptococcal disease' and can be very serious.
- Children who have chickenpox are more likely to develop a more serious infection if they catch me. If there is an outbreak of scarlet fever in the school at the same time as chickenpox, teachers should contact the local Health Protection Team for advice.
- I cause 15,000 to 30,000 cases each year in England.

**Who am I?**  
I am a bacterium known as Group A Streptococcus or Group A Strep.

**How do you catch me?**  
I live in the nose and throat and am very contagious. I move through the air in droplets in a cough or sneeze. I also spread when someone touches the skin, hands, clothes or linen that I have been on.

**How do you know it's me?**

**STAGE 1:** I start showing as a high temperature, headache, a sore throat and swollen neck glands.

**STAGE 2:** I'll then cause a fine red raised, sandpaper-like rash 12 to 48 hours later which typically first appears on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body. I may also cause strawberry tongue. Note: rash may look different depending on your skin tone.

**What to do about me?**  
See a GP as soon as possible as you will need antibiotics. Stay away from work, nursery or school until 24 hours after the first dose of antibiotics. Wash your hands regularly and cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.

### Chickenpox

**Key facts:**

- For elderly people or those with a weakened immune system, there is a bigger risk of pneumonia and encephalitis if you catch me.
- Once symptoms have subsided, I will remain dormant within your spinal nerves.
- I may reactivate if your immune system weakens as an ailment known as Zoster or Shingles, which is extremely painful.
- 651,000 cases\*  
2000+ hospitalisations\*  
\*per year in England & Wales

**Who am I?**  
I am a virus known as Varicella zoster.

**How do you catch me?**  
Through the air from a cough or a sneeze, or through fluid from chickenpox blisters. I am highly infectious, so keep your distance from anybody I have already infected.

**How do you know it's me?**

**STAGE 1:** I cause small, painful spots anywhere on the body, inside the mouth or around the genitals. They may be pink, red, the colour of your skin or darker in colour. I may also cause fever or cold-like symptoms.

**STAGE 2:** The spots I give you become very itchy, fluid-filled blisters, which then may burst.

**STAGE 3:** The blisters form scabs which may be flaky or leak fluid.

**What to do about me?**  
Wash your hands regularly and cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Avoid scratching your blisters, keep hydrated with plenty of water. You will usually get better after 1-2 weeks without having to see the doctor. If infected with me, keep away from others to make sure they don't get infected as well. Stay at home for at least 5 days from the onset of rash until all the spots have turned into scabs. If you're not sure the rash is chickenpox or if concerned call 111 or speak to your GP.

### Influenza

**Key facts:**

- I caused the most severe pandemic in history in 1918, infecting one-third of the Earth's population and led to between 20 and 40 million deaths before it subsided in 1920.
- The species that cause seasonal flu epidemics are influenza A and B. Influenza C viruses only cause mild infections.
- I affect all age groups but those that are most at risk of complications or hospitalisation include older adults aged 65 and above, children under 5 years and people with weakened immune systems or chronic respiratory illnesses.
- I caused 1,223 deaths\* in England and Wales in 2018.

**Who am I?**  
I am a respiratory virus commonly called the flu virus.

**How do you catch me?**  
I spread in the air in droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze. I can also live on surfaces for a short time and can spread if a person touches the surface where I am, and then touches their own mouth or nose.

**How do you know it's me?** My symptoms include:

- Coughing
- Sore throat
- Sneezing & runny nose
- Fever
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness and sometimes diarrhoea and vomiting

**What to do about me?**  
If you think you have me, stay home for 3-5 days until better, and drink lots of fluids. Take paracetamol or ibuprofen to relieve aches and pains. Antibiotics won't work against me as I am a virus.

**How to keep me away?**

- Vaccination with the annual influenza vaccine is the best defence against me. The vaccine is given every Autumn as the flu virus is always changing.
- It is also important to practice proper hand washing frequently and cover your mouth and nose when coughing to reduce the risk of infection.

### Norovirus

**Key facts:**

- Outbreaks are common in hospitals, nursing homes, schools, nurseries and cruise ships and can also occur in restaurants and hotels.
- Infection can be worse in infants, the elderly and those with other health problems due to the risk of dehydration, and may require medical attention.
- I cause between 6,000 and 18,000 hospital admissions\* each year in the UK.

**Who am I?**  
I am a virus that causes gastroenteritis or winter vomiting disease.

**How do you catch me?**  
I travel from one person to another through contact with their stool and vomit, or contact with contaminated food, hands or surfaces.

**How do you know it's me?**

- Watery diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain and nausea
- Body aches

**What to do about me?**  
If you have me, stay home until 48 hours after vomiting and diarrhoea have stopped. Keep well hydrated, replace fluid lost with water or re-hydration solution (such as Dioralyte). If illness is severe, you may need to go to hospital for fluids into the vein. Antibiotics have no effect on me as I am a virus.

**How to keep me away?**  
Frequent hand washing and thorough cleaning is the best way to keep me away. I can stay on objects and surfaces for days or even weeks and still infect people. I can survive some disinfectants, so special disinfectants may need to be used against me.

### Measles

**Key facts:**

- I am one of the world's most contagious diseases. 9 out of 10 people that can catch me will do so upon close contact with another person I've infected.
- I am especially dangerous to people with weakened immune systems, babies, and pregnant women, but I can cause serious illness in anyone.
- Complications I cause include pneumonia (lung infection), meningitis (infection of the coverings of the brain), blindness and seizures.
- People often confuse me with chickenpox. But the rash is different (see chickenpox page), and I cause cold-like symptoms while chickenpox causes headache, tiredness and reduced appetite.

**Who am I?**  
I am a virus of the paramyxovirus family.

**How do you catch me?**  
I can move through the air in a cough or a sneeze, or in drops of fluid that fall on surfaces. I can stay in the air or on surfaces for up to 2 hours.

**How do you know it's me?**

**STAGE 1:** The first signs I've infected you is a high temperature (above 38°C), cough, runny nose, or red, sore and watery eyes.

**STAGE 2:** I cause a rash a few days later that starts from the forehead and makes its way down. The spots are red, raised and clump to form blotchy patches. I can also cause tiny white spots inside the mouth. Note: rash may look different depending on your skin tone.

I am infectious from 4 days before your rash shows until 4 days after. So once you start showing early symptoms, it's best to stay at home and keep away from others.

**What to do about me?**  
Stay at home, don't get close to people unless you know they're immune. Rest, drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration and take a paracetamol or ibuprofen to keep your fever down. I'll usually start to clear up in about a week.

**How to keep me away?**  
The MMR\* vaccine is very safe and effective, it is the best way to protect against me and prevents 97% of infections if you have had 2 doses. \*MMR = Measles, Mumps and Rubella.

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### Pupil success

We are so proud of Nesta, as over the Christmas break he completed the NSPCC 5K 'Walk For Children' & raised an incredible £820 to support children facing abuse. The most impressive part of this is that he truly personified our Character Values with such a challenge! Well done, Nesta!



If any pupils experience success outside of School, we'd love to know about it, so do let Mr Carter know.

### ECHO Clubs

As the Spring Term starts, so do our second wave of ECHO clubs. On Wednesday, our pupils chose three options which they were interested in. As this term is shorter, with several Wednesdays interrupted over the course of the term, we will not swap ECHO clubs at half term, and instead, they will run for the whole term.

There are new ECHO options this term, including: designing a mural for the school hall, poetry club, science experiments club, junior coding, and drawing, as well returning favourites from last term, such as table tennis, Lego, and cookery.

As last term, all parents will receive a blurb next week regarding the ECHO club their child will be partaking in.

We know the pupils will enjoy these sessions; they were very popular when we started this initiative last term, with many pupils saying they were the favourite part of their week!

### SCA

Huge thank you for all your support at the Christmas Fair. It was a huge success, and worked really well. We can confirm that the overall profit for the fair is a massive **£3,008.88** which is an extraordinary amount, and we are very grateful for this.

There will be a number of exciting events running this term, and we will have more information about these upcoming happenings in next week's newsletter.

### Uniform Shop

We are very fortunate to have a uniform shop on site.

New uniform can be purchased in person at the shop on Monday 15:30-16:30, Thursday and Friday 08:30-09:30.



Alternatively, items of uniform can be ordered via [uniformshop@stchristophersthehall.org.uk](mailto:uniformshop@stchristophersthehall.org.uk). Any items ordered via email will be delivered to the main school office, and you will be informed when they are ready for collection.

When you have received the email that says the items are ready for collection, please may we politely request that you collect said items promptly, as we have had a number of items uncollected which were invoiced for.



Additionally, the second-hand uniform shop, run by the SCA, is open on Friday morning between 08:30-09:30.

### *What's Happening Next Week*

#### **Before/After School Clubs start this week!**

- Tuesday 17th January**  
- Year 6 trip to the Science Museum (all day)
- Friday 20th January**  
- U11 Football v Farrington (14:30-15:30)