



Newsletter 1

11 September, 2020

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INSET DATES THIS YEAR

Monday 5th October
 Friday 27th November
 Monday 4th January
 Friday 12th February

Please visit the school website for lots more information on what's different in school during the current situation. I will use 'Mr Freeman's Page' to keep a weekly diary.

Our latest Risk Assessment is also available along with lots of advice and information (see coronavirus information page)

CONTACT:

TEL: 01454 866781/2

EMAIL:

admin@stmichaelssg.org.uk

WEBSITE:

www.stmichaelssg.co.uk

Dear parents,

Welcome to the beginning of another new school year at St Michael's School. Whilst these are very challenging times for us all, I am delighted at the positive start that everyone seems to have made to the term. Throughout the school there is a purposeful and happy buzz of activity. We were somewhat apprehensive about how things would be after the lockdown, but most of the children are responding as if they've never been away.

We are looking forward to lots of exciting and enjoyable things to come as the year progresses, even though to start with we will have a number of limitations on what we can do. Our priorities over the first few weeks are to settle children into school, to ensure they are happy and safe, and to build up their resilience and stamina regarding their learning. We can then begin to identify gaps in their learning and put in place plans and strategies to support all children according to their need.

Please look out for an accompanying letter detailing some slight changes to our entry and exit times and procedures.

Wishing everybody a happy and successful start. Keep up the great work!

Mark Freeman, Headteacher

Communication: parents & school

There are usually two newsletters every term: one at the beginning and one about halfway through. Newsletters are emailed to parents (hopefully most if not all of you), and they are posted on the school website. You can also be notified via the school App. If you would like a paper copy, they are available by the office front desk.

School Website

www.stmichaelssg.co.uk

This is where we store and share all sorts of information, including information about staff, policies, school results and much more. The **year group pages** are where you can find information about spellings, homework, topics etc. If we ever have to reinstate home learning the website is the main way we will share and direct learning.

Email and texts

Email is our preferred system of communication with parents, as we can attach letters – and it's free. We use text messaging occasionally, mainly if something urgent turns up.

Communication with teachers

Class Dojo Teachers will generally communicate with parents about class matters on Class Dojo – please do sign up for this. You are also able to message the teacher directly on Class Dojo. Please do not expect an instant reply: teachers shouldn't be spending their evenings replying to messages.

Teachers will occasionally send letters home, particularly about trips which require signed permission.

Because of the current situation we will generally NOT have routine meetings in person with parents. That includes both teachers and the Leadership team. We are very happy to phone or send a zoom call. Please see the next page for our likely plans regarding parent meetings up until Christmas

School Dinners

School dinners for KS2 children have stayed at £2.25 per day (£11.25 per week). Please pay all money online – School meals are now paid through Arbor. (You can pay for several weeks at a time if you wish).

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club is available every day from 7.30 – 8.50 (or whenever your child's new start time is): the price is now **£2.00 per child** per session (Paid through Gateway) (Breakfast 70p if required) Please book and pay online. If you are entitled to a free place please book a place through the office.

Music Lessons

If your child has signed up for music lessons these start next week. **We have new social distancing rules for music lessons to ensure everyone stays safe.** The lessons are currently full, but let Mrs Torrington know if you want to be added to the waiting list for any instrument.

PTFA

The PTFA will be contacting parents shortly with details of their AGM (to be held by zoom). A number of PTFA postholders will be stepping down this year, so please consider stepping up! Obviously many of their activities are unlikely to take place (certainly no fireworks), but others are still being planned (tea towels, Christmas Cards) and they are open to new ideas and suggestions.

Free School Meals

If you think you may be entitled to Free School Meals please ring the office and they will send you a form – even if your child is in Key Stage 1. Every child registered for Free School Meals attracts extra income for the school – and entitles you to a range of other benefits (support for uniform, trip payments, clubs, breakfast club)

Packed Lunches

Just a reminder that children should not have sweets, chocolate bars or fizzy drinks. Crisps/cake bars etc are fine, but in moderation: one packet/one cake bar is plenty. Any concerns we have will be passed to the class teacher to discuss with parents. Please note that we send home all wrappings etc so parents know what has been eaten.

Fruit at breaktime: drinks

KS1 children also receive free fruit at breaktime. KS2 children may bring in a fruit snack or buy fruit from the kitchen. All children should have a water bottle in school. **No other snacks are permitted, and no items containing nuts should be brought in.**

Attendance: arriving on time

With our staggered entrance times it can be difficult to get your timing right. However, in another week or so we will start contacting parents whose children are late. Everyone has a 10-minute entry period and we expect children to be in school and ready to learn at their set time.

Please see the website for full details on our attendance policy.

Walk to School/Bike It: We continue to encourage walking/cycling/ scootering to school: all this helps improve fitness and reduce congestion. There are various bike storage areas around the school: please use the one nearest your child's class.

Parking If you do need to come by car, please allow extra time to park along Ratcliffe Drive: **please DO NOT use the doctors' surgery, as you are likely to be fined, or the school car park.** (unless you need disabled access). Definitely do NOT stop to drop off on the yellow zigzags after 8.00am: anyone doing this will be reported to the police. Thank you.

Parent meetings

We will not be holding our usual September parent information meetings in person, for obvious reasons. All relevant information will be posted on your child's year group website page. We are considering zoom meetings for classes: please look out for details on Class Dojo.

Parent evenings, normally in early November, will be held by zoom or Teams.

Please note that other meetings are by appointment only. In most circumstances parents will not be permitted entry to the school premises. Sorry!



Our new MUGA: almost finished (although we can use it)

Clubs

The latest clubs list will be available on the website shortly. We will mostly be limiting clubs to single year groups. Where this is not practical children should be in groups of no more than 15. All externally-run clubs will have their own risk assessment. Please see the list on the website for start dates. (Netball for Y6 starts on Monday!)

UNIFORM

We require all children to wear school uniform. If your child doesn't have a school cardigan/sweatshirt we can provide them with a loan item.

Sports Kit

PLEASE can parents make sure their child has the correct sports kit in school at all times. For ALL children this means a white t-shirt, black shorts, trainers/daps. New sports uniform is also available at Initially Yours, our uniform supplier.

Please note that indoors PE is usually done in bare feet, but children may use their normal shoes to get to the hall. Better still, a pair of daps.

Lost Property

We still have quite a few items left over from the summer term: but of course we are not able to allow parents to touch items and look for things you may have lost. We will try to identify their owners: it would be really easy if everything had a name on it. PLEASE can you check your child's clothing and bags are marked (things do wash off quickly and need regular re-doing).

Welcome new staff

There are quite a few new members of staff this term. Miss Jo Bracken is our new Deputy Head (that's her on the right): she will be leading on staff development and attendance. We have three new teachers: Miss Ledden (Y5); Miss Webb (Y4) and Miss Kuusik (Y1).

We also have a number of new TAs as we have been able to increase numbers after years of steady cutbacks. In KS1 we have Mrs Holloway, Mrs Donaghy and Mrs Pantlin, while in KS2 we have Miss Pitt, Miss Boothman, and Mrs Ovens. Mrs Baguley left over the summer break.

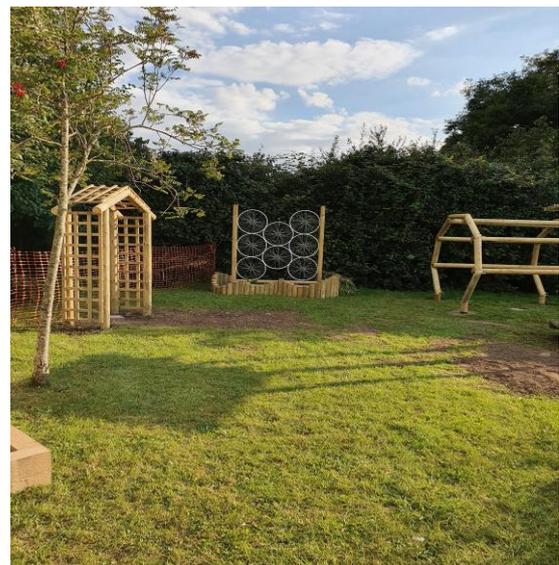
Vacancies

We will shortly have a vacancy for a lunchbreak supervisor, as Mrs Wendy Oates is retiring from that role shortly (but continuing in her two other roles).

We will also have an office vacancy very soon, as Mrs Starr is leaving at the end of September for a new job outside education. Mrs Starr has been a fantastic 'front of house' person for the last 7 years and we wish her all the best for the future. If you would like details of this post (30 hours per week) please contact Mrs Perham in the office by phone or email.



Our new garden area: nearly ready (just waiting for the grass seed to grow, then some new planting).



Other News

We are still not allowed overnight camps, so Y6 Camp will most likely not go ahead. I will be writing to Y6 parents shortly about this, and our other plans for that week. We will wait and see about Y5, but we are also putting alternative plans in place just in case.

Sport Inter-school sports are not likely to start this term. However, as a large school we are able to organise our own competitions within year groups, and we will begin to make the most of our new MUGA, as well as our lovely field. Swimming for Y4 will not restart until after Christmas at the earliest.

Music Music lessons are able to restart (see elsewhere) but singing and performances are unable to take place until further notice. We have booked the Church Centre for Seussical next summer – we all hope that by then we will be very much back to how we were. Can't wait! Other performances (eg Harvest, Christmas) are on hold, but we are exploring other ways of sharing things (eg by video or zoom). All suggestions/ideas welcome.

And finally...

Parents will hardly need reminding but there are several key elements that will help keep us all safe in these uncertain times.

- Maintain social distancing, especially when picking-up (drop-offs are pretty good). See LA attachment for more details. **If you cannot stay 2m apart then face masks are recommended, even outside.**
- Ensure you have a good handwashing routine (much better than hand sanitizer): in particular before you leave for school and as soon as you get home.
- Do not send your children in to school if you think they may have symptoms. This is the time of year for children (and adults) to develop all sorts of coughs and colds. If in doubt ring the GP or NHS helpline. If you're not sure what to do, ring the office and we will help if we can.

See the school website for lots more advice and links.

Stay safe!