

From Mr Spens:

Welcome back to a new academic year at St Helen's! The children have come back to school in such a positive way and there has been a real buzz of learning right across the school.

We'd like to say a big welcome to all of the children who have started their first week at St Helen's.

We're also excited to welcome Mrs Anderson to the school, teaching alongside Mr Adams in Year 4, and Mrs Hardy who is teaching in Year 3.



Back to school night – Wednesday 19th September

There's a lot of information to communicate at the beginning of the school year and so we would like to invite all parents and carers to our 'Back to school' evening on **Wednesday 19th September** from 6.00pm until 7.00pm. We will be talking about some of our plans for the new academic year. There will then be an opportunity for you to visit your child(ren)'s new classroom to have a look around and meet their teacher. Unfortunately we do not have space to allow children to attend with their parents.

Our catering team 'Autograph' will be serving tasters of the menu to parents before the meeting from 5:45pm when tea and coffee will also be served.

Reception and Year 1 Reading Evening – Wednesday 10th October

The teaching staff will be sharing an overview of how reading is taught in the early years of St Helen's on **Wednesday 10th October** from 5pm to 5.30pm and all parents are very welcome to attend. This is for parents only, but Mr Spens will have some activities for any school aged children to do in the next door classroom, should childcare be an issue.

Year 6 Trip to Deanfield

Next week, our Year 6's head to the Forest of Dean for the annual camp. They will be doing all sorts of exciting activities while they are away from canoeing to orienteering, to caving. We all hope that they have a really fantastic time away as a class!

Technology permitting, we'll be sharing photos and updates from the trip on twitter. Twitter users can follow us @sthelenspri, or you can visit www.twitter.com/sthelenspri.



Volunteers' Meeting

We're really grateful for all of the volunteers that we have in school. They carry out all sorts of different roles and support the learning of many children across the school. This year, Mr Spens will be leading a 'volunteers' briefing' on **Friday 5th October at 9.15am** and all those on our register of DBS checked volunteers are asked to come along. If any volunteers are not able to make this date, please contact the school and we will arrange an extra session. The briefing will contain important information about volunteering at St Helen's as well as other important safeguarding up-dates. If you are interested in becoming a regular volunteer, please contact Mrs Madle who will arrange for your DBS check.

Our target for school attendance in 2017/18

As with all areas of school life, including pupil achievement, we want to set ambitious targets for the year ahead. This year, we have set an attendance target of **97%** for the school. In each newsletter, we'll be sharing the class with the highest attendance and letting you know how we are getting on against our target.



Research shows that great attendance makes a real impact on learning and so I'd like to thank-you in advance for your support with this.

Reminder: Term Time Holidays

You will be aware that Headteachers have very little discretion in authorising term time absence from school, especially for family holidays, and that the school's response to such holiday requests has been to issue an 'unauthorised absence' letter.

A copy of the letter from our cluster of schools, originally sent in July 2017, reaffirming our joint approach to pupil attendance is available to read on our website. This letter reminds parents of the possibility of a Penalty Notice if a "holiday in term time" request would mean that your child will have had more than 10 sessions* of unauthorised absence in any 7 week period in the school year. (*A session is either a full morning or afternoon in school.)

School Photographer (advanced notice)

The photographer will be in school on Monday 24th September to take individual photos of all of the children and sibling groups. You may bring pre-school children for a family group photo from 8:30-9am.

Summer Challenge

The deadline for our poster competition has been extended to **Friday 14th September**. A reminder that children are asked to create a poster to show the rest of the school how you got on following the Gromit trail. You could include photos, drawings, writing and anything else you think would bring the poster to life!

Prizes: For the best posters in both KS2 and KS1 there will be prizes of £20, £10 or £5 in book tokens for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place entries.



The term dates for South Gloucestershire schools for this year are:

- Term 1: Monday 3rd September 2018 – Friday 26th October 2018
- Term 2: Monday 5th November 2018 – Friday 21st December 2018
- Term 3: Monday 7th January 2019 – Friday 15th February 2019
- Term 4: Monday 25th February 2019 – Friday 5th April 2019
- Term 5: Tuesday 23rd April 2019 – Friday 24th May 2019
- Term 6: Monday 3rd June 2019 – Tuesday 23rd July 2019

In addition to these term dates, our **INSET** days for the 2018/19 academic year will be:

- Monday 3rd September 2018
- Tuesday 4th September 2018
- Monday 7th January 2019
- Monday 11th March 2019
- Monday 3rd June 2019

Value of the Term

The value of the term is thankfulness. We're going to be looking for lots of different ways we can put thankfulness into action during the term. In assembly this week, we challenged any of the children to create a poster or even a short video at home entitled '25 things I'm thankful for'. For inspiration, an example video can be found on Youtube by searching for 'Kid President 25 reasons to be thankful'. Posters can be brought into school over the next few weeks and videos e-mailed into the school office. We'll look to share these with the whole school in our weekly assemblies this term. We look forward to seeing the results!

CASTLE SCHOOL OPEN EVENING

Thursday 27th September : 6pm-8.30pm

For more information visit www.thecastleschool.org.uk

ALVESTON TODDLER GROUP

Alveston Methodist Church Hall on Mondays during term time between 9:45 and 11:45. £2 per family
Please come along! There is no need to book in ... just come and join us!