

Dear Parents/Carers,

I can't believe we are in the final half term of the year- what a jam-packed year it has been and we have had so much at St Mark's to celebrate. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the children for working so hard all year (thank you families for supporting them). I also want to thank all of the staff at St Mark's for being so hardworking, dedicated and caring to all of the school community.

Term dates with confirmed INSET days for 26-27 are on our website: [St Mark's Church of England Primary School - Term Dates](#). Please note that the INSET days are subject to change.

In March we had a **Safeguarding Audit**, an external auditor visited St Mark's and met with staff and children and observed a day at St Mark's to look at our safeguarding arrangements they said:

'Pupils feel safe, supported and have evident pride in their school. All children felt able to raise any concerns easily and see it as a place where they are listened to and valued. It is clear they trust adults to help and support them if required.' Brightcore Safeguarding Audit March 26

Clean Air Challenge

We are taking part in The Clean Air Challenge this term! The event runs from Monday 15 to Friday 19 June. By walking, wheeling, scooting or cycling during the challenge week and by joining in with our active travel event, you'll be helping to reduce air pollution and create a healthier environment for everyone. Further details will be sent out on a separate letter. We hope lots of our children and families will get involved!



Water safety

On the final page of this newsletter there is information from Hampshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) about how to keep children safe around water- please read this as there are lots of resources which parents and carers can use in order to keep all children safe.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.

Best regards,

Rachel Jones

Vision Update

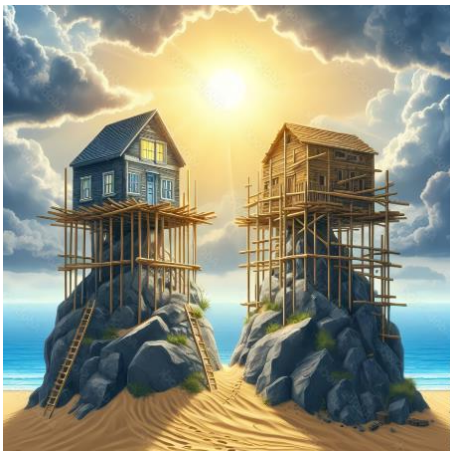
As of September 2025 our school vision is:

Living and Learning together- Building Firm Foundations

Our vision is for all children to develop a lifelong love of learning and sense of belonging, within a welcoming, nurturing and inclusive Christian community. All children have the opportunity to become free thinking, responsible citizens, whilst understanding and appreciating the wonder of our world. Children leave St Mark's with the confidence to live fulfilling lives, based on the teachings and example of Jesus. Matthew 7:24-27



Children are selected in Celebration Worship on Fridays as 'Builder of the week' where they have shown dedication to improving in one of the CIRCLE values.



Builders of the week since the last newsletter:

Barney, Emerald Class, Evelyn, Daniel, Ralf, Samaya, Isaac R, Emily, Elsie, Kyaan, Naitik, Noah, Rosie, Sabrina, Year 6, Abel, Roman, Ameer & Benny.

Attendance



Reminders about Penalty Notices:

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions (1 session is a morning or afternoon) or more, within a 10 week period, and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of Mrs Wright, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. This also includes children being late to school on 10 or more occasions after registers close at 9am, without good reason.

Further information can be found at: [Attendance guidance for parents | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/attendance-guidance-for-parents)

Please note that if we discover that a child has had an unauthorised absence (reported as illness or another authorised reason) school can change absence codes after the period of absence. Please continue to work with us reporting absences accurately.

David Attenborough Photo Competition

In May we held a photo competition in honour of David Attenborough becoming 100 years old. We had a lot of amazing entries which are displayed in the library in school. The staff chose one winner per class (the votes were very close). The

winners were:

Ruby Class: Ezra

Emerald Class: Daniel

Sapphire Class: Isaac R

Diamond Class: Lyra



Volunteers needed!

Any keen gardeners in the community of parents and carers?

We would love to involve more of our school community in maintaining the outside environment of our school. If you are interested in getting involved and helping in this way, please contact the school office at adminoffice@st-marks.hants.sch.uk for the attention of Mrs Jones to find out more about volunteering.



Hockey



Sapphire and Diamond classes took part in hockey sessions run this term by a specialist hockey coach, Georgie, from Fleet & Ewshot Hockey Club. Find out more about the hockey lessons in Sapphire classes update below.

Thank you to Georgie for taking the PE lessons- the children (and staff) enjoyed learning new skills. Thank you also to Fleet and Ewshot Hockey club for funding the sessions and providing us with the gum shields. If your child is interested in playing more hockey (and continuing to be coached by Georgie please find out more here: [Fleet and Ewshot Hockey Club](#)



Class Updates (part 1)

Sapphire class had a fantastic time with Coach Georgie from Fleet hockey club! They learned some essential hockey skills like round roll outs, ball control, stopping the ball, and passing. It was great to see them progress from practicing these skills to playing matches against each other, which not only improved their fitness but also built teamwork and cooperation among them.

We were lucky to have all the right equipment and protective gear, making sure everyone stayed safe and had fun. The students really embraced the chance to learn and grow, and their enthusiasm on the pitch was heartwarming. As they practiced, they not only improved their hockey skills but also developed social skills that will help them in sports and life.



Class Updates (part 2)

Emerald Class have been immersed into the world of bugs! Our project begun with a wonderful trip to Hinton Ampner where we spent the day in the great outdoors searching for different types of microhabitats and minibeasts. We have made our own creatures from pipe cleaners and clay too. We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of our butterflies which we have watched develop from the tiny caterpillars that were delivered 5 weeks ago! Emerald class worked hard revamping the bug hotel and adding the creative bug homes to the school garden which the children made as part of the home learning. Emerald Class have loved this project!



Ruby class went on a train journey to Guildford and visited the Cathedral. They explored the grounds, went on a picture scavenger hunt and listened quietly to see what they could hear at the Cathedral. They also had a walk around the inside of the Cathedral and played Cathedral bingo while waiting for their train back to school.

This half term **Diamond class** have really enjoyed learning about fairgrounds. We have explored electricity in science and how to incorporate circuits into our DT models. We also went on a short trip to a local working yard where we asked experts questions about how fairground rides are built, managed and maintained.



Games Event- Wednesday 8th July 3.20-5pm in the school hall



On Wednesday 8th July we are inviting parents/carers and children at St Mark's for our Games Event. When you come you will receive a free 'game pack' for you to take home with you with screen-free games and activities you can play as a family when you are at home or out and about.

St Mark's staff will be on hand to support you learning new games and to give any helpful tips or ideas about keeping your child safe online.

Please come along for all or some of the event to collect your goodies and to have some fun.

Invitations to follow

Dates for your diaries

Summer Term	Event
Thursday 11 th June	Year 6 Think Safe visit
15 th -19 th June	Reception Bike week
Tuesday 16 th June	Year 6 visit to Guildford Cathedral- leavers Service
Thursday 18 th June	Year 6 Wintershall visit
Friday 19 th June at 9am	RSE consultation in the school hall with Mrs Smith and Mrs Jones
Friday 19 th June am	Year 4 Inventors and Makers workshop
Monday 22 nd June	INSET day (school closed)
Tuesday 23 rd June	Year 6 visit Farnborough Sixth Form College
Wednesday 24 th June	Sports Day- details sent in a previous letter
Friday 26 th June	Nurse Clinic in school (separate letter has already been sent out)
Monday 29 th June at 3.30pm	KS1 performances (in the school hall) letter to follow
Tuesday 30 th June 2.15 and 5pm	
Wednesday 1 st July- Thursday 2 nd July	Transition days
Health & Sports week- 6 th -10 th July	Children can wear PE kit all week as there will be sporting activities every day of the week (details to follow)
Wednesday 8 th July 3.30-5pm	Family Games Event (details above)
Tuesday 14 th July 1.30 and 5.30pm	KS2 performance (at Salesian School 1.30 and 5.30pm) letter to follow
Friday 17 th July	Big Day Out
Tuesday 21 st July at 9.30am	Year 6 leavers service at St Mark's Church
Wednesday 22 nd July 1.30pm	End of Summer term
Tuesday 1st September (INSET day)	School grounds clean up day- everyone welcome (details to follow)

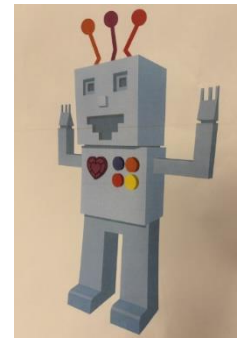
Online Safety updates

Baby and toddler screen time guidance - Best Start in Life



UK Government

Best Start in Life, a UK Government initiative have created a website with guidance for screen time use for under 5 and some ideas about alternative activities parents/carers can do with their children.



Screen time guidance for under 5s

Juggling family life and raising children in a digital world can be challenging. Find out more about how to support healthy screen habits for children under 5.

Last updated: 27 March, 2026



<https://beststartinlife.gov.uk/screen-time-under-5s/>

Pinterest

Hampshire Children's Safeguarding team have sent schools a link to an article about apps like Pinterest and some of the online concerns associated with them. Please read this article which gives some tips for reviewing the apps your child might be using including:

For parents and caregivers, this highlights an important point. It is no longer enough to ask, "What app is my child using?" A more helpful question is, "What can this app do?"

- *Does it allow private messaging?*
- *Can users connect with people they don't know?*
- *Are there community spaces where conversations happen?*



<https://www.thewhitehatter.ca/post/what-parents-didn-t-know-about-pinterest-matters-for-all-caregivers>

Children's Commission Guidance for parents

'Parenting today can feel overwhelming — especially when childhood looks so different from what we grew up with. There's no manual, and it can be hard to keep up with the fast-changing digital world your child moves through every day. This guide aims to make those conversations easier and help you support your child with confidence.' Children's Commissioner website:

['What I wish my parents or carers knew...': A guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives | Children's Commissioner for England](#)

On this website there is a parents' guide and an activity pack for children to support the whole family understanding more about children's digital lives.



The activity book has a range of resources and ideas to use devices creatively and ideas to 'get off the grid' (on the next page).

GETTING OFF GRID

Here are some suggestions from my Youth Ambassadors and Youth SEND panel for things you can do away from your phones.

Try to do one of these per day and build in time to do some of these things together and with your family and friends.

Play a sport		Do a hobby		Dance
	Go for a walk		Listen to music	
Learn something new		Bake a cake		Play some music
	Play board games		Spend time with siblings	
Volunteer		Meet friends in person		Do something arty

Create your own grid, add your own ideas.

[Water Safety Information from Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

As the weather warms up, children and young people are more likely to be around water – whether at home, on days out or on holiday. Almost half of drownings occur during the summer months when temperatures are higher. Drowning is one of the leading causes of accidental death in children in the UK, but most incidents are preventable. Babies and young children are most at risk at home, while older children and teenagers are more likely to encounter dangers in open water such as rivers, lakes and the sea. Research shows that teenagers and young adults are at increased risk during very warm weather, particularly when temperatures reach or exceed 25°C. Most drowning incidents can be prevented with the right knowledge, supervision and preparation. The Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) [Water Safety Toolkit](#) for parents and carers offers simple, practical advice to help families stay safe.

The toolkit is designed to be clear and accessible, helping families build confidence and make safer choices around water. It includes guidance on:

- **Everyday risks at home** – including bath time safety and garden hazards
- **Staying safe outdoors** – such as the beach, around rivers and in open water
- **Practical safety advice** – including the Water Safety Code and how to “Float to Live”
- **Age-specific guidance** – for babies, young children, older children and teenagers
- **What to do in an emergency** – including simple first aid steps and where to find further support

Small actions – such as close supervision, choosing safe places to swim, and having regular conversations with children - can make a significant difference. Practitioners are encouraged to read and share the [Water Safety Toolkit](#) with parents and carers to help raise awareness, support families and reduce the number of preventable tragedies.



ALWAYS FOLLOW THE WATER SAFETY CODE



Whenever you are around water:

STOP AND THINK STAY TOGETHER

Take time to assess your surroundings.

Look for the dangers and always research local signs and advice.



When around water always go with friends or family.

Swim at a lifeguarded venue.



In an emergency:

CALL 999

If you are at the coast, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

Don't enter the water to rescue.



FLOAT

Fall in or become tired - stay calm, float on your back and call for help.

Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.



ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY UK

Enjoy Water Safety | Free From Drowning



Learn more about water safety.

Scan the QR code