

Newsletter

Weekly news at St Christopher's



Dear Parents,

We hope you have had a productive and enjoyable week. Mr Carter has had a busy week attending the Year 4 residen-

tial to Dorset, so, on his behalf, it is our pleasure to write this week's newsletter.

The week in Dorset was, by all accounts, a mix of rainy countryside walks and sunny beach fun, with one pupil remarking during a wet hike, "I think my socks are wetter than the rain!" Despite the fun, managing belongings was a challenge, highlighted when they left the beach and one child exclaimed, "Wait, where's my shoe?" Making their own beds was a revelation, with several kids saying, "I feel sorry for my parents - they do this every day!" We hope the trip stimulated lots of curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills and that they all came back with many stories to share with you.

Freedom Fridays are now well established for this term. We thank you for all being so positive and for embracing this new initiative to support our school. So far, we have raised almost £600 for the SCA over three Fridays (last week, money was donated to the Air Ambulance.) That is an incredible achievement as an additional fundraising initiative which involves no effort and all the money raised will be benefited by the children. One parent recounted that it was very helpful to be able to wash all the school uniform on a Friday, before the weekend begins and have it ready for Monday morning! Win win!

Drop-ins or Walkarounds, as they are known here, are a regular and established feature at St. Christopher's The Hall. Form teachers and TAs are very used to the Senior Leadership Team popping in to their lessons to see all of the learning that is happening across the school. Miss Rule and Mrs Chamadia, as Assistant Heads and Heads of Phase, dedicate time each week to walk around the school observing teachers and celebrate the outstanding teaching they experience. They have a focus each week, whether it be the use of resources, differentiation, pace of the lesson or how TAs are utilised. This week, on our regular walkarounds, we were able to see Michael Rosen inspired poetry, coordinate challenges in Year 6;

a fun position and direction lesson involving directing their partner around a giant-sized grid. Year 1 has been reading The Emperor's Egg as their Power of Reading text and have written some incredible facts about penguins. We saw Preschool enjoying their outside space, and having fun experimenting with adding different colours to the water. It is so lovely and motivating to observe how engaged the children are with their learning and how inspiring and experienced our teachers are. Not only as Deputy Heads, but also as a current parent of a child in the school and a previous parent. It made us feel extremely proud of the school and comforted to see each and every child so happy, engaged and really enjoying their lessons. The learning was forward thinking and delivered by the teachers with a huge amount of pace and energy.

Our School Council are always looking into ways of improving and cleaning up our local environment. Mrs Wanstall and I are going to take these children on a litter picking exercise after half term. We will be armed with litter picking devices, gloves and bin liners. We will not only pick up litter we find around the compounds of the school but also on local streets. This week we have encouraged all children to look out for litter and try to pick it up, where possible. We would love to see some photos of litter picking, so please send this in for us to see and add them to our School Council board.

We are hosting another Secondary School Fair on Thursday 6th June at 16:30 in the Main Hall. This is a fantastic opportunity for parents, particularly in Year 4 and 5, to begin to explore the range of options available for their children's education, post Year 6. With so many excellent schools in our area, it's understandable that families might feel overwhelmed by the choices. Providing you with a chance to engage directly with representatives from these schools can certainly help alleviate some of that stress and enable you to make more informed decisions. It's a significant step in the process of selecting the right school for your child's future.

We wish you an enjoyable weekend and hope the Year 5 residential is a huge success next week.

Mrs West and Mrs Wanstall
(Deputy Heads)

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Year 6 Residential

On Monday, 6th May, the Year 6 children eagerly set off on their much-anticipated residential trip to Madrid early from Gatwick Airport. They spent an action-packed four days soaking up all of the glorious sunshine and vibrant culture that the city has to offer. They also took part in a variety of challenges to develop their Spanish speaking and listening skills in real-life settings.

After settling into the hotel on the first day, they had the opportunity to sample some traditional Spanish cuisine at dinnertime, followed by a walk to one of the city's most famous landmarks, La Puerta del Sol for a well-deserved and delicious ice cream.

Day two was a busy one with lots of sightseeing. The first point of significance was the El Oso y el Madroño (The Bear and the Strawberry Tree) and their group leader, Yolanda (a walking Wikipedia on all things Madrid), shared the history of the city's official crest. They visited the gourmet tapas market, Mercado de San Miguel, to explore the culinary delights on offer and complete a translation challenge whilst admiring the delicious and unusual delights being enjoyed by the locals, including an almost 2m tall swordfish head and giant crab. Afterwards, they headed to Palacio Real Gardens for lunch with a view and a game of frisbee. During the afternoon, they enjoyed some downtime at Plaza de España's adventure playground followed by delicious and well-earned churros and hot chocolate at San Ginés, one of Madrid's oldest churrerías. Yum, yum!

Day three began with a hearty Spanish breakfast and a trip to the beautiful Plaza Mayor where they soaked up the atmosphere in the lively square. In the afternoon, they visited the Reina Sofía museum where they took part in an art treasure hunt, racing around the museum to locate famous paintings (including Pablo Picasso's 'Guernica') and facts about them. This was followed by a visit to the beautiful and lush Retiro park and they enjoyed a picnic and games by the lake. During the evening, after a delicious dinner at the hostel, it was karaoke time, hosted by Mr Pretara and his wonderful assistants, Mrs Wanstall and Mr Chowdhury! The children had lots of fun singing and dancing to their favourite tunes. Mr Chowdhury cannot get the tune for 'Green Anaconda' out of his head... he will never be the same again!

On their final day, they all had the opportunity to visit the local Mercadona supermarket for food and snacks for the final trip home that afternoon. Once the children ate their final meal, at the hotel, with a starter of gazpacho soup, we celebrated each child's achievements in a presentation. Each adult shared the wonderful things we had a chance to witness over the four busy days and this rounded off our time in Madrid in a wonderful way. The teachers awarded special prizes to children who had particularly impressed them during the trip. With rooms vacated and possessions packed, it was time to head to the airport and head home.

The children all had a wonderful time and were fantastic ambassadors for our school. At every opportunity, they enthusiastically embraced the challenge to develop their cultural understanding and converse with locals in Spanish. Residential trips are always such an enriching experience, allowing the children to develop key life skills such as resilience, independence and teamwork. They have undoubtedly created wonderful memories alongside their friends that will last them a lifetime. Buen trabajo, todo el mundo.

Finally, a huge thank you to all of the staff that led the trip so successfully: Mrs Wanstall, Mr Chowdhury and Mr Pretara. I know the staff enjoyed sharing the adventure with the children and it is always wonderful to witness the awe and wonder in a different environment. A special thank you goes to Mrs Dubeck, as without all her preparation, hard work, diligence and organisation, this trip would never have taken place. Gracias, Señora Dubeck.



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TFL Workshop - Year 6

On Monday morning, Year 6 were visited by Lewis from Travel for London (TFL) for a workshop about how to use London's public transport network and how to stay safe when doing so.

Throughout the workshop, Lewis shared some handy tips about travelling across London, starting with practical advice on how to use the website and app, with a focus on efficient travel options. He spoke to the pupils about their Zip Cards, detailing what they are used for, what their perks are and how children can get one up to five weeks before turning 11 years of age. He also shared with the children about how ticket inspectors may ask to see their Zip Cards on public transport, particularly during peak hours such as the morning rush hour, and how they must carry their Zip Card to avoid receiving a fine.

Lewis' presentation contained a lot of practical advice on how children can stay safe when travelling. Some of his tips included:

- When catching a bus or train, always stand 'your height and a step back' from the platform - this could help prevent you falling into the road or onto a platform.
- When coming out of a train station, or waiting at a bus station, avoid using your phone as this is a prime opportunity for thieves on bikes or mopeds.
- Avoid looking at your phone when walking; this will make you more aware of your surroundings and potential risks.
- Look for 'Safer Strangers' if you need help. These are TFL employees who are trained to support you and will always be wearing a uniform and carry ID.

Lewis also shared some clear do's and don'ts on public transport, including:

- Do not smoke cigarettes or e-cigarettes (vapes).
- Do not leave food or rubbish behind.
- Do not put your feet on the seats, or across aisles.
- Do not open any fire exit doors without there being an emergency.

- Do not graffiti or vandalise public transport.
- Do not push or show violence towards any other passenger, including friends.
- If someone is presenting behaviour that makes you feel uncomfortable on a bus, keep yourself safe and move away. Speak to the driver to report it. Do not challenge their behaviour if you do not know them. Antisocial or criminal behaviour could result in a child receiving a criminal record, starting from just 10 years old.

Below are some of the children's key take-aways:

Adnan – *I learnt to always stand on the right hand side of an escalator when using the underground. The rhyme is 'Stand on the right and hold on tight!'*

Anthony – *Lewis taught us that it is ok for us to talk to a bus driver if we need help. They are known as 'Safer Strangers' at TFL.*

Maya – *I already knew about the Emergency/ Information buttons on train/tube platforms, however I did not know that they were monitored on CCTV to keep the public safe.*

Rafi – *Buses now have around 23 CCTV cameras to monitor the public for their safety and also identify possible criminal behaviour.*

Mr Pretara - *I did not know that bus drivers can contact the Police at the click of a button, and that the Police can track a bus's exact location and even intercept it on-route. Oh, and don't forget to say hello and thank you to your bus drivers; something as simple as this could make all the difference to their day!*



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St. Christopher's The Hall School

is proud to host an...

Thursday
6th June
16:30 - 19:00

Independent
SECONDARY
SCHOOL FAIR

Delegates from the following Secondary Schools in South East London will be represented:

- Babington House
- Bishop Challoner
- Bromley High School
- Cedars
- Croydon High School
- Eltham College
- Farringtons School
- Jags
- Radnor House Sevenoaks
- Royal Russell School
- St Dunstan's
- Sydenham High School
- The Laurels
- Trinity School
- Walthamstow Hall
- Whitgift

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Scan or click to register



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Loom Bands ECHO

This term, the children in Pre-Prep have enjoyed taking part in our first-ever Loom Banding Club and it is safe to say that they are all now well and truly hooked on this new craze. The children spent the first couple of weeks learning how to create bracelets, necklaces, rings and hair bands using the rainbow finger-loop technique. As they have grown in confidence, they have also mastered the art of the fish-tail technique and used loom bands to create their own amazing bouncy balls.

We have been so impressed with how quickly the children have picked up this new skill. They can now speedily create loom bands as long as their arms in just one session, and they are always so eager to proudly show off their beautiful designs to their friends and teachers. They have really enjoyed visits from Prep children who have come along to support them and show off their fantastic creations as well. This week, we had a visit from Elliot in Year 5 who showed them a huge loom band that took 4 hours to make!

The club is all about having fun in a calm, mindful environment; however, it also serves to develop key skills such as following instructions, fine motor skills, persistence, patience, creativity and self-esteem.

It has been wonderful to hear such positive feedback from parents about how enjoyable the children have found the club. The children have been sprinkling loom bands around at home as they enjoy creating colourful creations with their own loom banding kits.

Year 4

Year 4 were honoured that Mr Pham (Monty and Hazel's father) came into school to speak about his personal experience as a refugee from Vietnam. We have been studying the text, 'The boy at the back of the class', in which the protagonist is a refugee from Syria. After Mr Pham's informative and inspirational presentation, the children developed their understanding and empathy of the brave, challenging journey that refugees face. A huge thank you Mr Pham from all of Year 4.

English Parent Partnership:

We look forward to inviting parents along to our English Parent Partnership event on Thursday 20th June from 5pm - 6.30pm.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide you with a broad understanding of how our English and Phonics Curriculums are delivered, from Reception right up to Year 6.

We will begin the evening delivering informative information to you all. Afterwards, you will be invited to go to the age-appropriate classroom for your child, and will experience a 'lesson' with the same structure and format we teach the children.

We believe that strong parent/teacher links play a key role in the development of children, and would therefore welcome you to join us for the evening.

Preschool workshop

Last week, Preschool had a very exciting time taking part in a drama workshop all about 'Going Places'. We travelled by train, by aeroplane, by bus and we rowed our boats to lots of exciting destinations. We built sandcastles on the beach, we toasted marshmallows on the campfire and we walked like penguins in antarctica. The children all took part with great enthusiasm and imagination and we all had a brilliant time!



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Music News - Tea Concert

Thanks to Mrs. Lovett for a lovely 'Tea concert' last Thursday showcasing her piano students. We enjoyed some wonderful performances, plus cakes and biscuits made by our amazing kitchen staff! These small concerts have been a great success as they provide a platform for performance in an informal setting and give an opportunity for parents to meet their child's instrumental teacher. We look forward to hosting some more Tea concerts next year!



Year 1, 2 & 3 concert

A reminder that our **Year 1, 2 and 3 concert** will be held next **Wednesday, 22nd May at 9am**. Entry will be via the main gate 10 minutes before the concert begins. The Junior Choir will be opening the concert, and all pupils will be performing with their Year Group, along with some solos from some of our Year 3 instrumentalists. Please ensure that pupils are wearing Summer uniform and, if performing a solo, have their music/instrument in school on Monday for rehearsals and Wednesday for the concert. We look forward to performing for you!



Allergy reminder:





Please do not send in snacks which contain nuts or sesame

Schools for Nature

The Pre Prep have been helping the environment by creating areas in and around our playground to encourage wildlife, including insects and bees. We have been feeding the birds with lovely nut-free fat balls. Also we have created a "wild corner" where we have put lots of cuttings, twigs, sticks and leaves for the wildlife to hide in. On Friday afternoons we have sketched the birds, the trees and leaves and plants in the playground. Then we took part in the RSPB bird count which helped us with our Maths! Last week in Reception, they planted bean seeds and if we look after them properly they will grow. We are very proud to have received a certificate for our endeavours, from David Attenborough, no less!



What's Happening Next Week

-  **Monday 20th May**
 - Year 5 Residential Trip (Mon-Wed)
-  **Wednesday 22th May**
 - Year 1, 2 & 3 Music and Drama Showcase (09:00-10:15)
-  **Thursday 23rd May**
 - Last day of half term - school finishes at normal time
-  **Friday 24th May**
 - INSET day (no school)