

# Thomas Russell Junior School

'Ambitious culture, strong team ethos, outstanding academic achievement, high expectations, exemplary behaviour' Ofsted 2019.



## Newsletter



Issue No. 12

Headteacher: Mrs S Sharpe

27<sup>th</sup> November 2020

### Congratulations to Miss Branson!

We are delighted to announce that Miss Branson had a baby girl on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November. Both mum and baby Leah are doing really well. They are home and beginning to settle in to new routines ... as well as enjoying the constant rounds of nappy changing and sleepless nights! We wish the new little family all the very best and are looking forward to meeting Leah as soon as it is safe to do so.

### Christmas celebrations

As with many things this year, it is not possible for us to offer a 'typical' range of events. Normally we would have a trip to the cinema, a carol concert at St James' Church, a whole host of choir events, a Christmas disco and loads of other things going on in school.



We want to make this year special in different ways, so on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December we will be having a Christmas day where children will make decorations, listen to Christmas music and decorate their classroom as well as having some fun. Children are invited to wear Christmas Jumpers on this day.

We are planning on holding our Christmas Dinner Day on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December, again we hope lots of children will take part and would like to offer another opportunity for children to wear their Christmas Jumpers on this day too. We intend on making it a really festive event ☺

We'll be turning our classrooms into cinemas to watch a Christmas film and enjoy popcorn too. We're also working out how we can manage our Christmas Post Box deliveries safely ... watch this space for more information next week.

### Christmas signing spectacular

No, that's not a typo, it does say signing, rather than singing! Sadly, it isn't possible to get our classes or choir singing all together yet, so this year we will be putting together a signing spectacular! We have a selection of Christmas songs, which we are going to learn to sign along too. We'll let you know how rehearsals go!

### Cold classrooms

Our classrooms are feeling very cold at the moment as we try to keep them well ventilated. We are offering children the option of wearing a thicker / warmer jumper over the top of their uniform, or a body warmer if they have one. Some have got super excited and started to wear their Christmas Jumpers already over their uniform!



## Parent Governors

Don't forget we have two vacancies for Parent Governors at the school. If you would like to support the school as it navigates its way through the current pandemic and continues its journey of improvement, then please do get in touch, either with me via [questions@thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:questions@thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk), or with our Chair of Governors, Mr Terry Wells on: [governors@thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:governors@thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk).

You will find a nomination form attached to Newsletter 11. The deadline for nominations is Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December. Please do contact us if you would like to find out more about this role.

## Valiant Vodafone!



We are delighted to share with you that Vodafone are offering 30GB data-only SIMs for 90 days up to 250,000 disadvantaged children across the UK to help them access school work from home, catch up on lost learning during school holidays and continue with their education if schools are closed due to Covid-19 restrictions. SIM cards are limited to 30GB so once that data limit is reached, no further data is available and once the 90 days has ended, any remainder of the 30GB of data will expire.



If there are any parents who would benefit from this scheme, please let me know ASAP. Your information will be handled in the strictest of confidence.

## Fluenz vaccination

We have the immunisation team in school on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November giving the nasal spray vaccinations. Please reassure your child that they do not need to worry about this, as it is a really quick and painless process.

## E-Safety

It has come to our attention that there are two new(ish) 'crazes' which are causing some e-safety concerns.

The first is with regard to an online computer game called 'Among Us'. It seems it is possible to chat to strangers on the game who may or may not be who they say they are. The recommended age is 12+ and whilst there are ways to play more 'safely' and for parents to have greater control, there are also inherent risks. Among Us allows children to connect with other players from anywhere in the world. The game has in-game chatting. Please remember - where the kids are is ALWAYS where the predators are.

Please find below a link which you may wish to look at if you have any concerns. [Among Us App Review. Is it safe? What's the buzz? | Protect Young Eyes](#)

Our second concern is around exposure to a YouTube video / series called 'Doll Maker'. Whilst some children may enjoy viewing the content and find it entertaining, others can find it quite scary and disturbing. We find ourselves in a tricky position of wanting to raise awareness of the issue and discouraging children from talking about it in school, whilst simultaneously acknowledging that by opening a discussion we will automatically attract children's interest. The last thing we want is for this craze to negatively impact on children's wellbeing like the 'Killer Clown' craze did a few years ago.

We would encourage parents to pay close attention to their children's online activity, especially as many more will have greater device and internet access since Lockdowns and home schooling.

Thank you for your support and please do get in touch if you would like further advice on e-safety matters.

### **TT Rockstars Battle**

The most observant children may have noticed that Mrs Preston started a TT Rockstars Battle on Monday morning. This battle, which runs until 17<sup>th</sup> December, sees children from each of the year groups battle against each other for the prize of Ultimate Rockstar Year group!

Congratulations to Lana in Y6 and and Lawy in Y3 who have battled furiously this week to take first and second place!

You might think that the older children have a better chance of winning, but we've seen some super commitment from our Lower School classes, and we think they might well give the Upper School classes a run for their money ☺ We'll give you an update next week!

### **Games Kit**

Now the temperature has turned even colder, it is essential that the children wear full length joggers, leggings, tracksuit trousers or skins on the day they are coming dressed in Games Kit.

Please could we also ask that everyone has a t-shirt AND tracksuit top / sweatshirt etc. It seems we have a few who are trying to compete to be the last one wearing shorts & t-shirt! From Monday, we will phone parents to request appropriate clothing be brought to school if we feel it will be too cold for children to spend 7 hours in these temperatures in what they are wearing. Thank you for your support and understanding in this matter.



### **From Lockdown to Tier 3...**

We have now heard that Staffordshire will be in Tier 3 when we come out of the second Lockdown on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

For some people who have worked solidly through the second Lockdown much like they worked through the first, you may feel your day-to-day life has changed very little and you'd like a bit of a rest from the onslaught. Those trapped at home wishing they could go to work but not allowed will feel totally the opposite, no doubt just as desperate.

Some will be gutted to feel their traditional Christmas is stolen from them by the restrictions; others may be struggling to know how they can afford Christmas at all, and some may feel hurt that restrictions are altered for Christmas, if they have missed other religious celebrations.

We don't want to see any children go without - it there is anyone who is worried about affording presents or food or anything else - please speak to us in confidence and we will definitely make some magic happen.



*Best wishes, Mrs Sharpe*