



Welcome to the Stella Maris family!

Welcome back to everyone after the summer break – and an especially big welcome to all new members of our community.

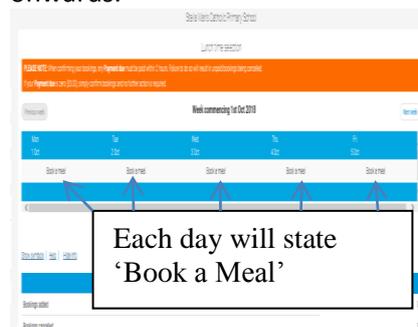
We have many new children throughout the school and, as usual, have settled to their new routine very quickly.

If you are a parent who is new to our community, please make sure you come along to meetings and events and generally make yourself known. If you want to see the Headteacher about anything, all it takes is a 'phone call to the school office to make an appointment – or, of course, you can simply introduce yourselves at the beginning or end of the school day.

School Meals

As many of you will be aware, the school meals are prepared on site for the children by Chartwells. Dinners are booked for and paid for using ParentPay. We are aware of the problems over the past few weeks wish to apologise on their behalf for all the confusion and frustration this has caused. We are delighted to say

this has now been fixed and when you log on you should see the following screen for Monday onwards:-



Bookings can be made in advance (as far as the end of the academic year ahead) or on the day (before 9.30 am). **Regardless of whether or not your child is a Universal Free School Meal (Imps, Pixies or Elves), Free School Meal or Paid – all meals need to be booked ahead by the parents.**

If you have not yet activated your ParentPay account, now is the time to do this. If you have any difficulties please email office@stellamaris.kent.sch.uk or call Mrs Tidd.

All dinners must be booked by parents with effect from Tuesday 2nd October 2018.

Free School Meals & Pupil Premium

Don't forget that **all children in Year R, Year 1 and Year 2 classes (Imps, Pixies and Elves at Stella Maris)** are able to have a Free School Meal, whether they qualify under the old rules or not.

Research has shown that a healthy free school meal improves children's learning and productivity, while saving parents money during tough economic times.

Whatever class your child is in, it is important to register with the local authority for a free school meal if you are entitled to it.

This is because the school receives **£1320 Pupil Premium** for every child registered as eligible for free school meals.

Registration has now been made much easier if you have access to the internet – simply visit www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/free-school-meals and complete the online application. If you *can't* access the internet, paper forms are obtainable from the school office.

You are eligible for free school meals if you are in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income support
- Income-based job seeker's allowance
- Guaranteed element of pension credit
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Child tax credit (but not if you receive *working* tax credit) and a combined household income below £16,190
- Support under part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

You can send the form off yourself, or call into the school office for help. Of course, all requests for help or information about registering for free school meals will be dealt with in the strictest confidence by members of school staff. Should you need our help in completing applications, please make an appointment at the office to see either Mr Gretton or Mrs Tidd.

Keep in touch

Almost all pupils have now returned their GDPR Consent/Declaration forms that were issued in May. Should you have any changes to any of your preferences or contact arrangements – please notify the school office.

Secondary transfer in 2019

Parents of children in Year 6 are now able to apply for a secondary school place for 2019 online at www.kent.gov.uk (follow the links: *Education & children* → *Schools* → *School places* → *Secondary school places*). The web site has information on how to apply for a place at secondary school for 2019 using the Secondary Common Application Form (SCAF).

The form should, if possible, be completed on-line – at www.kent.gov.uk/ola (there's a link on the above site). If you **cannot** apply on-line, or would prefer to complete a paper form, these are obtainable on the above website, or we can print one out for you if you come and ask! **The closing date for completion and return of the forms, on paper or on-line, is 31st October 2018.** So if you need help, please ask by 19th October due to half term holidays.

Parents of children who have taken the selection test will be sent their results on 11th October, *before* the application deadline.

Some schools, including St Edmund's and St Anselm's, require an additional Supplementary Information Form (SIF) – these are available from the schools in question and should be returned direct to them. There is a list of schools requiring a SIF on the above website.

Our school rules

Supporting our approach to behaviour management at school, we have just two school rules:

- Treat others the way you would like them to treat you
- Act sensibly at all times

To support these rules, we have five school values:

- Love
- Care
- Trust
- Respect
- Share

Obviously, there are other practical regulations as in any school – walking on the left in the corridor, for example – but our approach to handling behaviour comes down to these principles. Parents might like to reinforce this by adopting a similar approach at home – you might be pleasantly surprised by how positively the children respond.

Term Dates 2018 - 2019

Term 1	
Friday 5 th October	TAG Day for Gardening Club
Tuesday 9 th October	Pixies & Griffins Trip to Dover Castle
Tuesday 9 th and Wednesday 10 th October	Parents evenings (slip attached)
Tuesday 16 th October	Hobbits – Forest School at Stella Maris
Wednesday 17 th October – Friday 19 th October	Unicorns – Kingswood Residential Trip
Friday 19 th October	Flu Vaccinations for YR, Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5
Friday 19 th October	End of Term – 3.15 p.m.

Term 2	
Monday 29 th October	Inset Day – School Closed to pupils
Tuesday 30 th October	Children return to school.
Wednesday 31 st October	Individual School Photographs
Thursday 1 st November	All Saints Mass – Whole school at Our Lady Help of Christians
Monday 5 th November	Firework display (weather permitting)
Tuesday 20 th November	Open Morning 9.30 a.m.– 12.00 p.m.
Sunday 25 th November	Christ the King 11.00 a.m. OLHOC Guildhall Street

For all the key school dates for this academic year, please log onto the calendar on ourschoolsapp.

School attendance

If your child is absent from school for any reason, please remember that we need some form of official notification. The best way to do this is to send us a note when your child returns to school. An alternative is to 'phone the school office. A verbal message from your child, however, is not acceptable.

It is worth remembering that children constantly absent from school without good reason are, generally speaking, less likely to succeed in life than those with a good attendance record.

Family holidays should be taken during the school holidays. In exceptional circumstances, children may need to be taken out of school during term-time. If this is the case, please see the office for an Exceptional Leave Authorisation form. This will **only** be authorised when parents can show that there are exceptional reasons for taking time out of school during the term *and* a child's attendance record otherwise is above 96%.

School uniform

Uniform items are available to buy at Channel Uniforms in Cheriton Place. Please ensure your child comes to school appropriately turned out, in particular:-

- sensible school shoes
- school uniform
- coats etc. as appropriate for prevailing weather conditions
- a sensible haircut
- no jewellery or make-up.
- Hair accessories should be in keeping with the school uniform colours and should be small and subtle.

From our school brochure . . .

Uniform

As well as helping our children to look smart, our school uniform has been designed to be simple, easy to wear and look after, and helpful to parents worried about what clothes to buy for school.

Grey trousers (long or short)

Grey pinafore dress or skirt

Blue and white checked or striped dress (for Summer Term)

White, grey or blue shirt

White or blue blouse

Royal-blue cardigan or school sweatshirt

White, blue or grey socks, or tights

Plain white or black PE shorts

White PE T-shirt

White or black plimsolls

Upper Juniors may also need

football kit for the winter months.

Shoes

Sensible school shoes (brown, black or navy) should be worn - trainers are not allowed, unless the children wish to change into them at lunch time.

Each child must have a PE bag and all clothing should be marked with the child's name.

Jewellery

For safety reasons, jewellery of any kind is not allowed, apart from watches, and small studs or sleepers for earrings. Children with studs or sleepers must be able either to remove them or to cover them with tape for PE lessons.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Please note that if your child is persistently in breach of our school uniform policy, in spite of repeated reminders, we reserve the right to ask you to take them home to remedy the situation.

Safeguarding our pupils

School is always a busy place . . . but especially at the beginning and of the school day. Our staffs priority is to ensure compliance with safeguarding regulations. For this reason we ask that parents remember **not** to come into the school building at the start or end of the day, unless they have an appointment with a member of staff. The children come into school using the outside door – any that are late, and find that the gate to the playground has been shut, should come to the main entrance to be **left there** to make their own way to class (if they are very young, a member of staff will take them).

Please respect this school rule. If you don't –

- It weakens the security of the school site
- It disrupts teaching that has already begun
- It sets a bad example for the children

Teachers are always very busy at the start of the day, so please don't try to monopolize their attention at the classroom door. If you have something you need to discuss with them, make an appointment via the school office

so that a mutually convenient time can be found.

. . . and the finish

Again, please don't come into the school building at this busy time of day unless you have a genuine reason to do so. If you need to come into the school, you **must** report to the School Office first. This is to comply with our Safeguarding Policy as we now still have children in our charge with various after school activities. Our teaching staff will be expected to challenge all parents in the school at the end of the day that are not escorted by a member of staff.

Parents on Mobile Phones

Continuing with the Safeguarding policy, please would parents ensure they avoid using mobile phones whilst on the school site, and certainly never use video messaging whilst on the playground. This is crucial for safeguarding our pupils. The children are also excited to see their grown-ups and tell you all about their day, this is difficult if you are using mobile phones. Thank you for your understanding with this matter.

Problems

If your child is having difficulties with another child in school, please speak to the class teacher – **don't** speak directly to the child you think is causing the problems, or to their parents.

If you speak directly to another child in cases like this you leave yourself open to all sorts of accusations, including the possibility of assault.

So please help us with our problem-solving approach, even though your first response might be quite emotional. Remember: we love all the children, too, and

do everything possible to keep them safe and happy.

If your child comes home from school unhappy for any reason, and you don't feel you can sort it out at home, please let us know. Most problems can be resolved more quickly if we get to hear of them sooner rather than later. It is, of course, essential that the children are happy at school.

Our Schools App

Just a reminder that we understand >95% of our parents have now downloaded the app facility. This is our preferred method of communication for ease for all concerned. **If you have previously confirmed you have down loaded this app, and have since removed/changed phones, please reinstall for prompt and efficient communication from the school.**

We appreciate that from time to time you receive many notifications – this is to reduce paper in book bags and to ensure key messages reach parents in a timely fashion. We are working with ourschoolsapp to find solutions to target messages to certain groups of parents. We will keep you informed with our progress.

After School Clubs

We are delighted to announce the start of our After School Provision for those parents who are working or in full time education. These sessions are held each night until 5.00p.m. latest. This club is only made possible by the support of our Teaching Assistants who also have young families of their own. For this reason we ask that all those parents using our club arrive **NO LATER than 5.00 p.m.**



If you are interested in booking a regular slot for this provision, please see the office.

Below you will find the current time table for after school activities. If you are interested in your child attending one of these sessions, please complete the necessary slip or email office@stellamaris.kent.sch.uk

Monday – Friday	After School Provision - £5 per child per session.
Monday	Sunshine Club Mrs Jukes Yoga Sessions Mrs Perez Football Club Mr Langley
Tuesday External bookable Provision	High Five Multi-Skills Sessions Commences Term 2
Wednesday	Gardening Club Mrs Felicetti/Mrs Green Running Club Mrs Moore
Thursday External bookable Provision	Football Club Elite Ready Steady Bake Mrs Bain
Friday	Choir with Duncan

Friday Tuck Shop

The School Council will be running the Tuck Shop again each Friday. Please remember that £1 is the maximum children can spend each week.

Meet Lily!



For those of you new to our school community, Lily visits once a week for a short period of time and is used to support children in various ways. For example she is used as a reward, such as being able to walk her or spend some time with her. She is also used for nurture purposes – animals can be very therapeutic!

She will only come in for short periods of time, will be with an adult at all times and kept on the lead. If you have any concerns or you know that your child is allergic to dogs please let me know so that we can ensure that Lily does not come into contact. Please note that this will not affect the general rule of No Dogs Allowed.

Parents' Evenings

Parents' Evenings will be taking place on Tuesday 9th October between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. and on Wednesday 10th October between 3:50 and 6:20 p.m.

The meeting is to discuss your child's progress using information that has already been shared with the children during their Assertive Mentoring Review.

A booking form will be sent home in school book bags. Please fill in one form for each child you have in school and return it to their class teacher as soon as possible. This is especially important where siblings are in the school to ensure consecutive appointments.

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