

Appendix to Newsletter No. 3

Message from Norma

Our first SEN Parent/Carer Coffee Morning of the year will be taking place next Friday, 27th September in Hub 3 from 9am until 10.30am. Come along to our relaxed informal group where we chat, share information, support each other and get help and advice on SEN issues.

The group takes place on the last Friday of every month except when there is a school holiday when it is the last Friday before the holiday. For further details speak to Norma Hallett, your PSA.

Praying Parents

A small and friendly group of parents, often with pre-schoolers, meets in Hub 3 (on 'The Street' along from Norma's Shop) on Monday mornings to share a hot cuppa and pray for the schools up here on top of the hill, all the people (big and small) in the schools, and the communities they serve. It's a half hour. It's a great start to the week, and lovely to get a chance to pray for the children and their precious years at these wonderful schools. Just come along or email a.bailey@st-marks.wilts.sch.uk for more info. It's flexible. If you would prefer us to trial a different day/time, please say.

Readers

We are often approached by parents volunteering their services to hear children read at either or both schools. We absolutely appreciate and welcome this. Reading is just about the most important thing a youngster can learn. We espouse the view that a child learns to read so they can read to learn. It is the key to everything. Children need oodles of practice, patience, correction, modelling etc to become better and more confident readers. An army of parents to supplement home reading is essential. In the olden days when I started teaching any parent could rock up to help and many did. Indeed a huge number of our Teaching Assistants and MDSAs started working in schools via this route. Many people will know that to work with children schools, scouts, sports clubs etc have to check they are appropriate and safe to do so. Many parents may have completed old CRB forms that morphed into DBS checks. Keeping children safe in education 2019

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/830121/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_060919.pdf) is an extensive document setting out how we keep our children safe in school.

However, we are keen for common sense to prevail without compromising safety.

We know parents have been put off by the volunteer application form and the checks e.g. references. I understand this and am keen to help streamline the process so parents can safely come into school to help children. In the next few weeks we hope to release a slimmed down application form. On behalf of the school I can risk assess every applicant and get them working almost immediately whilst the application process continues in the background. So if it takes many weeks to 'clear' we can still proceed without compromising children.

If you would like to become a regular reader in school, and haven't already worked with us, please let me know via head@st-marks.wilts.sch.uk, your availability etc and we can start the process in the next fortnight.