

Friday 4th February	NSPCC Number Day-'Dress for Digits!' Wear something with a number on. £1 donation for NSPCC please.
Tuesday 8th February	Safer Internet Day. Children will be carrying out online safety activities in school.
Wednesday 9th February or Thursday 10th February at 4.30pm	E-Safety Session for parents. The link is meet.Google.com/bez-agoa-toa Information will be placed on the website.
Tuesday 15th February at 5pm	Year 6 SATS Information Session for parents. More information to follow.
Thursday 17th February	Break up for Half Term Holiday. Staff INSET training day on Friday 18th February.
Monday 28th February	Pupils return to school
Thursday 3rd March	World Book Day-dress up as your favourite book character and bring your favourite book for a day of reading fun! Paired reading, World Book Day activities and lots of story time! We are also encouraging children (and staff!) to enter our 'Radical Reading' competition, sending in their photos of reading in exciting places such as on a bouncy castle or out on a walk! More information to follow.
Wednesday 2nd March at 4pm	Y1 Phonics Parent Session—all parents of Y1 pupils welcome. More information to follow.
Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th March	Parents' Evenings-more information to follow.
14th to 18th March	Science and Technology Week in school.
Monday 14th March-Thursday 17th March	Y5 Bikeability-more information to follow.
Wednesday 6th April	Y2 SATs Information Session-more information to follow
Friday 8th April	Pupils break up for the Easter holidays.
	Information and letters regarding any Educational Visits/Sporting Events will be sent out to the relevant classes in due course.



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Plea For Books!

Mrs Longster and Miss Shaw-cross are currently revamping their reading areas in class.

We would be so grateful for any donations of picture books and also non-fiction books suitable for infants. Please send any books in with your child.



Headteacher News

January 2022

Welcome to our happy school, where everyone is valued and given the opportunity to 'let their light shine.'

Happy New Year!

Dear Parents, Carers and Children,

It has been wonderful to welcome the children back after Christmas and we've all started the new year with hard working attitudes and enthusiasm.

It has been a tricky start to the year, with a significant rise in COVID-19 cases across school and rapidly changing guidance, but I have been so impressed with how well our pupils, staff and parents have coped with such a challenging situation. May I take this opportunity to send warm wishes to those children, parents and staff isolating at home at present-you are in our thoughts and please do get in touch if you need

anything at all.

We have been gathering virtually as a school to celebrate Collective Worship and Star Assemblies-this has been a lovely opportunity to join together as our St Matthew's Family!

You can catch up with all that is happening at St Matthew's on our website, **www.stmatthewsrc.org**. Please follow us on Facebook and Twitter too.

On the back page are key dates for this term. Unfortunately, we are limiting events and visitors to school at present whilst we are experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak. However, we really hope to be able to welcome

parents back with open arms to school events as soon as we possibly can.

Remember, if you have any questions whatsoever or would like to make a telephone appointment with any member of staff, please just contact the office.

Best wishes,
 Mrs E Alderson
 Head Teacher



Farewell Mrs Thomas and Mrs Broomfield!

At Christmas we said, 'Bon Voyage!' to our beloved Mrs Thomas (MFL teacher and Admin Officer) and Mrs Broomfield (Lunchtime Supervisor). It was an emotional farewell for both staff members but children showed the ladies how loved they are by making cards and

sharing their favourite memories with them.

We thank both Mrs Thomas and Mrs Broomfield for all they have done for St Matthew's and wish them the very best of luck on the next stage of their journeys. Please be aware that Mrs Young is now in the School

Office on her own—we appreciate your patience when contacting school.

We have also welcomed Mr Thompson as our new Caretaker. You will find him on our gates each morning - he has been made to feel very welcomed by your smiles and waves each day!

It's Good to Be Green!

At St Matthew's we all work together to ensure we have a calm, happy learning environment for our pupils to succeed in. We are excited to inform you of our new Positive Behaviour Reward Scheme that we are about to launch in school. Our School Council have been working hard with Mrs Longster regarding the scheme and are excited to introduce the 'Good to Be Green' reward scheme.

Each class will have their own

reward chart and every child starts each day with a green card. If a pupil retains their green card all week, they will receive a reward certificate and also be entered into a prize draw for their class to win a treat from the prize box. The School Council have suggested examples of what 'green' behaviour looks like, such as good listening, working quietly and helping others.

The School Council also devised a list of behaviours that are 'amber' or 'red.' If any child receives a red card,

parents will be informed of the incident and a consequence will be issued for this, such as time out.

We are hoping that this scheme will prove to be an exciting new initiative for our children and ensure that the exemplary behaviour we see so often from our children each day at St Matthew's is truly valued and celebrated.



Vacancies

We are currently advertising for two Lunchtime Supervisor Posts at present to work in our lovely school and join a fantastic, hardworking team. If you are available to work lunch times, have some experience of working with children and would like to make a real difference to our pupils, perhaps this could be the role for you!

Please see the vacancies page of our website for more information and details of how to apply or call our school office if you have any questions about the role.



Winner!

We were thrilled when Sam, one of our Year 6 pupils, won our MP's Christmas card competition! All schools in the constituency were invited to take part and the theme was the Jarrow Crusade. Sam's design was used for Kate Osborne's official Christmas card and Kate even came to school to award him with his card and prize!

Well done to Sam and all of our Year 6 entrants-their designs were amazing!

Year of the Eucharist

2022 is the Diocesan 'Year of the Eucharist.' We have a beautiful display in the entrance of school and will be sharing monthly liturgies with the children. The Diocesan Year

aims to celebrate the Eucharist at the heart of the life and mission of the Church and to gather people back to the Mass and the Sacraments.



Reading Rocks!

We love reading at St Matthew's and are enjoying our new reading reward scheme. So many pupils have made our 'Reading Hall of Fame' and have read over 50 or 100 times at home this year already!

We cannot stress enough the importance of hearing your child read regularly at home-it has such a positive impact on achievement and attainment and also inspires creativity!

When your child reads at home, be sure to initial and date their reading square in their reading diary. These achievements will then be celebrated in school. We are about to release our second reading square, with new rewards and the chance for our pupils to climb even higher on our 'Hall of Fame!'

Be an Attendance Hero!

At St Matthew's RC Primary School, we have a history of excellent attendance.

In the autumn term our whole school attendance was 96.58%, which was one of the highest figures in South Tyneside-well done, everyone!

We appreciate your continued support with attendance and would like to remind parents that headteachers can only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances.

Being in school on time is also so important—children who are late are greatly disadvantaged as they miss starting the day with their peers and valuable learning time.

COVID-19 Update

We are continuing to adapt to the changing COVID-19 procedures in school and follow Public Health Advice. We have a large number of COVID-19 cases in school at present. We have already had outbreaks in two classes this term and will inform you if your child's class reaches outbreak levels (5 or more cases of COVID-19). We have also suffered from significant staff absence. However, our aim has been to ensure school remains open for children which, thanks to our amazing staff, we have achieved.

Recycling

Our Eco-Committee are delighted with the donations of clothing, used batteries and used printer cartridges we have received to be recycled. Remember that we raise funds for school from these whilst also doing our bit for the environment!

We have filled our clothes recycling bin once already—we collected an incredible 199 kgs of clothes and raised a fabulous £59.70! Please spread the word to others and encourage them to drop off their bags of unwanted clothes and shoes during our school hours. We would also like to put some flyers out to local residents to make them aware of the facility—please let us know if you are able to drop any of these around the doors!

Getting to school on time also helps children to establish good routines that will help them for the rest of their lives. Please note that ongoing lateness is classified as unauthorised absence, in line with guidance issued by the Department for Education.

May we also remind you that, for safeguarding reasons, if your child is going to be absent, you must email or call the office by 9am each school day letting us know why. Mrs Young is spending a great deal of time in the morning contacting parents who have not informed school of the absence.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring your child is an Attendance H.E.R.O.—Here Every day Ready and On time!

It continues to be important that, if your child tests positive on a lateral flow test or PCR test, you inform the school office of this. We would also ask that that you email the result to school when you receive this. Remote learning will be provided by your child's class teacher for any children self-isolating.

Please also be aware that, if your child is self-isolating, they are able to return to school if they test negative on two days of consecutive lateral flow tests from day 5 onwards.

Safeguarding

Keeping all of our pupils safe at St Matthew's is always a priority of ours. In the autumn term all children watched NSPCC assemblies to help them learn how to stay safe and we also teach aspects of safeguarding through our curriculum.

We have an updated Safeguarding Policy and our Designated Safeguarding Leads in school are Mrs Alderson, Mrs Torley and Miss Wiblin—please contact them via the school office should you have a safeguarding concern.

We also want to support you in keeping your child safe online and appreciate that this is a difficult task in today's modern world. The Local Authority is offering sessions in February to support you with this—please see the diary dates for more information.

Defibrillator Donation

We are delighted to tell you that we have received a very kind donation of a defibrillator at St Matthew's from the charity SADS UK.

It was donated to the charity by the Black Sheep Fitness Academy, in memory of their dear friend Allan Stone. More information regarding the charity and the donation is attached with this letter.

Thank you to both SADS and Black Sheep Fitness for this donation of lifesaving equipment.

Thank you for your diligence and understanding with the ongoing pandemic—we understand how difficult this has been for our families and pupils and are here to support you in any way we can.

