



THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

8th September 2023

Welcome back to all of our St Faith's families, and a special welcome to those who are joining the St Faith's community for the first time. I was delighted to meet so many of you on the first day of term and it was a great pleasure to hear the buzz of excited pupils around the school again, sharing stories of summer adventures. Any first-day nerves appeared short-lived thanks to the efforts of our staff to make the new start a happy, relaxed and enjoyable one for all. Many new friendships have already been formed and our new starters are learning their way around their areas of the school. Our older pupils are also enjoying the responsibilities that come with seniority and making sure that everyone feels supported and welcome.

School Assembly



In the school assembly on Wednesday I welcomed pupils and staff into Ashburton Hall. The opening assembly of the new academic year is a very special occasion, as we gather together for the first time. I chose as the theme for assembly 'Life's journey' and we reflected on the decisions that we make along the way. In fact I had decided on this theme at the end of the summer term, when I attended an online service for the Heads of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust Schools, of which both our Foundation Schools, St Faith's and The Leys, are members. The card I was sent before the service carried a quote from the famous 18th century Methodist preacher, John Wesley:

“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”

This is as resonant today as when he first wrote it, and indeed those of you who have visited the Great Hall at the Leys School will have seen these words on the wall.

To illustrate the idea of everyone having a different journey in life, in the assembly I also shared some aspects of the story of ‘The North Star’ by Peter H Reynolds. We particularly enjoyed looking at some of the beautiful illustrations and we reflected on the advice given by a wise bird in the story: ‘Ask yourself where it is you want to go, and follow the signs you already know’. We thought about our own hopes and plans for this academic year, and the start of our exciting journey together, as well as how we could follow the advice of John Wesley, and help each other along the way.

Year 8 Prefects

On Wednesday, Mr Critchley and I presented the Year 8s with their Prefect ties and badges. This role carries with it a level of responsibility and expectation on our part, recognizing that our Year 8 pupils are the most senior in the school. It has long been the belief at St Faith’s that each pupil should have an opportunity to excel in this position, not just a select few. We can often see the quieter pupils rise to the challenge and become great leaders and role models to the younger pupils. This was put into action later that morning when the new Prefects met with pupils in Year 3 for a ‘buddy session’.

Year 2 Team Flags

Year 2 pupils have had a wonderful first few days getting to know each other with a focus on ways we can be happy, secure and ready to learn. To help with their sense of belonging, the children have designed and made team flags which will be proudly displayed in their classrooms.



Meet the Tutors & Introduction to the New School Year

Meet the Tutors & Introduction to the New School Year information evenings for parents to meet their children's new tutors and find out more about arrangements for the forthcoming year, have taken place this week for Years 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6. For the other year groups, they will take place next week on Tuesday evening starting at 19:00. Refreshments will be served in Ashburton Hall and details of the room allocations have been sent out via School Post.

SFPA Coffee Mornings

As I am sure many of you are aware, our St Faith's Parents' Association (SFPA) organises coffee mornings throughout the school year, to enable parents to connect with one another informally, over a hot drink and a delicious pastry. These coffee mornings take place in Tom's Garden (opposite the entrance to the dining hall) from 0830. These are arranged by year group and I look forward to our first events next week, when it will be the turn of Years 1 & 2 parents on Thursday and then all new parents in Years 1-8 on Friday. Further information will be sent to parents.

Around the Site

Turning to events that happened before this term started, the summer holiday weeks were extremely productive ones on the school site. Our grounds staff and contractors were engaged in a hive of activity, including painting, carpentry, and construction, and I am sure that you will join me in admiring the new canopy over the Years 3 and 4 outdoor play area. Offering protection from the extremes of heat and heavy rainfall, we hope that it will enhance the children's enjoyment of outdoor playtime. Our Pre Prep pupils are also thoroughly enjoying their beautiful new outdoor play structure.

In parallel to the improvements to the school site, in July and August, the school played host to the Barracudas holiday camp. Other clubs taking place at the beginning of the holiday included Code Camp, Art and Design, Bikeability and the ever-popular St Faith's Cookery School, as well as Little Wyverns and the Multi-Activity Course. I am very grateful to the staff for supporting all of those activities.

Speech Day 2023

Although it feels like a very long time since we all gathered in the marquee at the end of the summer term for Speech Day, it is a pleasure to be able to share a montage of photos with you from that day. We are especially indebted to our guest speaker on that occasion, Sir Michael Morpurgo OBE. Sir Michael is of course one of Britain's best loved children's authors, as well as being co-founder of the Farms for City Children charity. Those of you who are new to St Faith's may not know however that Sir Michael taught at St Faith's in the 1960s and was in charge of the English Department and Library during his time here. He also returned to open the Discovery Zone in 2002.

PowerHouseGames

The final report on last term's activities relates to the 'PowerHouseGames, which took place on the last Tuesday of the summer term in our Sports Hall. These were attended by our 2023 Year 8 leavers and overseen by John Willis who founded the charity Power2Inspire, which aims to embed inclusive sport in communities by delivering events for everyone to enjoy.

For the first part of the morning, Year 8 experienced new age curling, sitting netball, sitting volleyball, goalball and visually impaired football. After a boccia tournament, Year 4 (Year 5 from this September) joined Year 8 and the afternoon was spent with the older pupils teaching the younger members of their House how to play each game, so that they could enjoy the inclusive games together. Despite the rain, the pupils showed excellent leadership skills and, most importantly, followed Power2Inspire's number one rule, "To have fun!". Thank you to John Willis from Power2Inspire who was truly inspirational in leading our pupils and to all the staff who helped to make the day a success and manage logistics in the wet weather. You can also read more about John's recent 8-day adventure kayaking 108 miles from Cricklade to Eton



Dorney in this recent article from British canoeing's Paddler magazine [here](#) and on the Power2Inspire website [here](#).



Eco Schools Green Flag

I am delighted to share the news that St Faith's has been awarded the Eco-Schools 2023 Green Flag award with Distinction. It is testimony to the hard work of all of our pupils, but most particularly to the pupil and staff members of the Eco Committee, who champion initiatives to improve sustainability across the whole St Faith's community.

Elections to the Eco Committee for pupils in Years 5-8 will take place on Monday next week.

[ECO COMMITTEE end of year REPORT](#)

School Council

Pupils in Year 7 and 8 have the opportunity of putting themselves forward for election to the St Faith's School Council 2023 – 2024. The School Council will meet regularly across the academic year and will work together to be effective representatives of the St Faith's pupil community. The School Council provides our older pupils with a unique opportunity to develop a range of key life skills, such as collaboration and team working, communication and public speaking skills, as well as project management experience. They will work on projects such as facility development, catering provision (always popular), fundraising and other special events across the year. In addition, the School Council will also be developing a 'Big Project' that will span the academic year.

Important Transport Update

Thank you very much indeed to the school team, our willing group of parent volunteers and to all parents for ensuring a smooth start to the term from a transport perspective. We would like to highlight a couple of points as we settle into our routines.

- Home to School Services. We are running three services which can all be booked through the StudentSafe portal – the link is in the start of term information. The routes are Royston and Saffron Walden (both morning and afternoon) and Madingley Park and Ride (mornings only). There is spare capacity on each service for either termly or potentially ad-hoc bookings.
- HomeRun App. Our HomeRun app promotes sustainable travel through journey sharing, provides travel related information and allows us to collect essential (anonymised) travel data for our travel planning. We would greatly appreciate it if all families could sign up to the app, details of which are available in the start of term information.
- Afternoon Pick-Up. Traffic can be at its heaviest in the afternoons for pick-up. Please could we encourage a prompt pick-up at the end of the school day, in order to reduce congestion and ensure the safety of children and others.

Breakfast

The new school year has meant a very welcome return to our breakfast club provision. I am extremely grateful to the catering staff for making this possible. As well as being able to beat the Cambridge traffic in the morning, it also offers the opportunity to enjoy a hearty and healthy breakfast with your children. You could also arrange to meet friends there – a very convivial way to start the day.

Breakfast is served from 07:45 until 08:15 and each day corresponds to different year groups (see below). Please note that all children need to be in registration at 08:15.

Day Year Groups

Monday 7 & 8

Tuesday 5 & 6

Wednesday 3 & 4

Thursday 1 & 2

Friday Foundation

This is currently a cash-based service. Could I remind parents that, if you are staying for breakfast, please use the Cambridge Football Stadium parking rather than parking outside the school.

Healthy Snacks

Continuing on a food theme, I would like to draw your attention to the advice in the parent handbook where we request that children bring a healthy mid-morning snack such as fruit, salad or a healthy (nut-free) cereal bar, crackers or a sandwich. Please note that children are not permitted to bring in sweet chocolate, cakes or biscuits for their mid-morning snack. However, as a treat, and under the supervision of the teacher, children may bring in cakes to share with their peers when they are celebrating their birthday. We would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that for reasons relating to potential allergic reactions, St Faith's is a nut-free site,

and so is absolutely essential that nut-based products are not brought onto the school site.

Wedding Bells

We are delighted to offer congratulations from the whole St Faith's community to Miss Gilford who becomes Mrs Dalton, Miss Wacey who becomes Mrs Shaw and Mr Clayton-Smith on the occasions of their recent marriages.

Old Fidelian BBQ

This evening I will be delighted to host the reunion BBQ for our Old Fidelians. This event takes place every September and this year we are forecast very fine weather for the event. We are expecting more than 40 guests, and we look forward to welcoming back to St Faith's former pupils and staff. There will be an opportunity to look round the school as well as a chance to reminisce over the archive material on display. If any parents amongst you are Old Fidelians and would like to receive notifications of forthcoming events, please do email your name, years of attendance and House to marketing@stfaiths.co.uk.

Instagram Account

We have just launched the St Faith's Instagram account. Please follow us at **stfaithscambridge** for daily news and updates and do let us know what kind of content you would like to read there. Send us a message or email us at marketing@stfaiths.co.uk and we very much look forward to hearing your ideas.

And Finally....

Returning to the food theme, I have very much enjoyed chatting with the pupils this week about how much they are enjoying the delicious food prepared by our kitchens. As mentioned at the start of this newsletter, the children have been learning their way around the school and settling in to new timetables, but equally impressive is their keen interest in examining this term's [menus](#) and planning choices. For those of you yet to explore these online yourselves, it seems that the sticky toffee pudding remains a firm favourite, but the wholemeal apple & chocolate crumble with chocolate sauce is highly anticipated....

Thank you for your warm support of our school at the start of this academic year and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the coming weeks. Meanwhile I wish you and your families a happy and relaxed weekend in the late summer sunshine.

With all best wishes,

C. Hyde ~ Dunn

Dr Crispin Hyde-Dunn