

Dear Parents/Carers, St Christopher and St Etheldreda children,

A very Happy New Year to each of you and a huge, huge THANK YOU for all the wonderfully thoughtful and generous gifts and cards from you all. We hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas break and didn't get too confused by the days in between Christmas and New Year because we certainly did!

The following, long (sorry), letter lets you know what your child will be discovering and learning about this term and it also serves as a reminder about other important information.

First of all - welcome back to an exciting spring term and our new **Big Question:**

“What makes the Earth angry?”

Straight away you can see how this idea should get your child interested and engaged with the world around them. This Big Question will involve diving into our three concepts of **“Bravery”**, **“Choice”** and **“Resilience”** in order to develop our *exploring skills* this term and make strong links with international geography.

Our class book this term is “Escape from Pompeii”. In this wonderfully illustrated picture book, we travel back in time to view the eruption of Mount Vesuvius during the Roman Empire. We join the main character Tranio and his friend Livia as they witness the destruction of their city. As always, there is no need/expectation to buy a copy of the book as we will be providing copies of the text for your child. We will also be using the text “Pebble in my Pocket” to enrich and deepen their geographical and scientific knowledge in our lessons. As well as this we will be having a “Reading for Pleasure” book that the children can enjoy through the term.

Maths- During the spring term we will continue to work through the White Rose maths programme. The children will further develop their skills and work towards mastery in a range of different mathematical concepts. This term there will be a focus on Multiplication and Division, Length and Perimeter and Fractions. Within each lesson we will build in opportunities for the children to practise their times tables, associated division facts and mental maths skills. *There is a government expectation that children will know all their times tables to 12 x 12 by the end of year 4 (and a statutory test in Summer 2024 for all Year 4 children) so any times table games you can play with your child at home to embed these skills would be great.*

Science: our topic this term is “Rocks” and ties in very well with our Geography work on volcanoes and earthquakes! Before “digging deeper” into magma and pumice the children will be investigate how we compare and group different kinds of rocks based on their appearance and physical properties. They will describe how fossils are formed when things that have once lived are trapped within rock and also investigate that soils are made from rocks and organic matter. There will lots of opportunities to use our local environment around Elton to discover what rocks are used in the buildings and even gravestones nearby and why they might change over time. The children are very welcome to bring into school any fossils or interesting rocks they have come across already!

RE- We will be delving into 2 different enquiry questions for two different faiths this term, Sikhi and Christianity. In Sikhi ‘How do Sikhs put their beliefs about equality into practice?’ and in Christianity,

'Why are good stewardship and generous giving important for every Christian?' The children will further develop their skills in learning **about** religion (knowledge and understanding of religion and worldviews) and learning **from** religion (responding to religion and worldviews). During these units the children will be making connections and links building on previous topics and finding golden threads between other faiths. In these enquiry units they will be developing their understanding of the concepts through 3 areas: Scriptural narrative, Community Practice and Daily Living.

Music- We will be cultivating our singing skills and playing a range of instruments with increasing confidence and control. This will lead to developing ways to improvise and compose using musical notation and investigate some great composers and continue to appreciate the history of music.

Computing- Year 3 will be learning how to touch type being introduced to finger positions in relation to key areas on the keyboard. Later on in the term they will also develop their skills in sending and receiving emails learning how to add attachments safely and learn key terminology. Year 4 will be writing for different audiences learning the features of various types of documents and creating their own, exploring different functions and formatting features. They will also become hardware investigators learning how to recognise various parts of a computer and their functions. Year 5 will be developing their word processing skills before moving onto looking at databases.

PSHE- The children will be further developing their skills in 'Personal Safety' The unit of work builds on a Protective Behaviours approach. As such, it is underpinned by two key principles: *we all have the right to feel safe all the time*; and *we can talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small*. Through the series of lessons, children will learn how to recognise their Early Warning Signs, which help them to know if they are feeling safe or unsafe. The children will be encouraged to consider the qualities they would look for in a 'network' person and decide who are their trusted adults that they could talk with about anything, good or bad, big or small. They will have opportunities to practice seeking help or advice from others, including when and how to dial 999 and how to contact Childline.

Later on in the term we will be covering the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) unit. In this unit children will develop familiarity with the names of the main external parts of the body and become more confident in describing them. They will consider the amazing nature of their bodies, with a view to developing respect for their bodies and themselves. Children will also consider simple hygiene practices and their levels of responsibility for carrying these out. The main themes of this unit are 'body knowledge', 'body functions', 'body awareness/ image', 'personal hygiene' and 'prevention of illness and disease'.

Year 5 children will learn the key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body; particularly from the age 9 through to age 11. This includes physical and emotional changes including key facts about the menstrual cycle. RSE (Relationships Sexual Education) is a lifelong learning about ourselves. It includes emotions, self-esteem, relationships, rights and responsibilities, sexuality and sexual health.

Latin- Latin is a brilliant way to support children's literacy as it can help children make connections between Latin and English grammar and vocabulary, and it gives them the key to unlock English. It also gives them a deeper cultural knowledge, helping them understand common concepts and phrases like "et cetera" and "Achilles' heel." We will continue to develop skills in reading sentences in Latin, Numerals and the verb "to be".

Homework:

We will continue to set the weekly homework on “Microsoft Teams” in order to try and save some trees! We will ask the children to click the ‘hand in’ button to show us that they have completed the task at home. We set the homework on Teams on a Wednesday and we also show the children during the day how/where to locate it on Teams each week and explain how/what to do.

The **weekly** homework will consist of:

Times Tables: Every day for about 10 minutes we expect the children to be practising their times tables and associated division facts. (They should know how many 7s are in 42 as opposed to simply only knowing that $6 \times 7 = 42$.) *Please remember that the Government expectation with regard to times tables is that all children **by the end of Year 4** should know all their tables up to 12x. Year 4 children will also be formally tested in the Summer term.*

Daily Reading: At least *15 minutes* per day. This is a **minimum** - please read more if you can! Regular readers make for stronger spellers and writers – so the more reading the better please! The children need to bring their current reading book into school **every day** as we will have periods of quiet reading each day. Our class library has been significantly updated and improved with a wide range of texts but we encourage children to bring their own reading books in from home too – as long as it is appropriate for their age and reading ability and, very importantly, the children are enjoying the book.

Spelling: Every Friday the children will be tested on the spelling strategies we have been looking at during the week in class. We will share these spelling strategies in the spelling sheet that we send home. Your child will also bring home a new copy of the Year 3/4 and 5/6 Spelling Lists that they were learning/learnt last term. The spelling lists for your child will be handed to them by the end of next week.

The idea is that the children should be able to complete all of these homework tasks independently helping to develop the skill of taking responsibility for their own learning and being able to organise themselves effectively, without it being driven solely by parents.

If there are any issues accessing Microsoft Teams we can always print out or email a copy of the homework.

For the **‘Daily Homework Tasks’** there is no expectation that the children actually produce any written/paper evidence to me as many of these tasks will be done verbally or through an online game/activity.

HOMWORK MATTERS

Homework Matters allows the children the opportunity to delve a bit deeper into our Big Question and produce their own mini-projects. The expectation is that the piece of Homework Matters will have taken some time to complete. *(It must be clear that a good amount of time as opposed to minutes have gone into creating something that can be beautifully presented in class).*

PE: St Christopher Class - Every Friday morning. St Etheldreda Class – every Tuesday afternoon. Your child may arrive for school in their PE kit on their PE day. Please remember that layers are a good idea for the cold days which will be coming at some point!

Water bottles: Even though we are heading into cooler/colder months it remains very important that your child brings a water bottle every day into school and take it home every day to be thoroughly cleaned. ***Brains need hydration – whatever the weather!***

Change of shoes! A change of shoes is imperative in order to keep our lovely school clean and a nice place to learn in. *(Please bring wellies/change of shoes in a separate, strong, bag.)*

Our addresses are hhannam@elton.cambs.sch.uk and jmurphy@elton.cambs.sch.uk You can contact us with any questions at these addresses and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Warm regards

Mrs Murphy 😊 and Mrs Hannam 😊