

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

We hope you all had a lovely summer break and got to recharge your batteries! We are very excited to be back in school and we can't wait to get stuck into our new topic this term!

*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 autumn term and our new **Big Question**:

***“Where is the past in the present?”***

I hope that 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 **“Change”**, **“Community”** and **“Legacy”** in order to help us to develop and explore our *enquiry skills* this term and make strong links with the changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age.

Our book this term is called **“Stone Age Boy”** by Satoshi Kitamura. This is a wonderful picture book, displaying detailed and intriguing illustrations that gives an incredible insight into what life was like during the Stone Age. 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 – **and it also means that we read the text together in class, not at home, so no spoilers (please)!**

**A class trip** has been arranged for **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September**. We will be visiting the inspiring surroundings of Flag Fenn Archaeological Park in order to take part in a **“Stone Age Survival Day”**. In addition to handling Stone Age artefacts the children will have the opportunity to **“get stuck in”** when building with wattle and daub; creating pieces of Stone Age art work and also learn how to stalk prey!

September **in maths** means back to basics! We will be working on our times tables, associated division facts and our 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.* We will also begin the term by looking at place value before moving onto the four number operations - addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

**Science** – we will be investigating living things and their habitats; this will include observing and comparing the life cycles of plants and animals in the local and wider environment and even making connections with life from prehistoric times! The children will explore examples of human impact (both positive and negative) on different environments and the negative effects of population and development, litter or deforestation. We will be using and making simple guides or keys to explore and identify local plants and animals; making a guide to local living things; raising and answering questions based on our observations of animals and what we have discovered about other animals we have researched.

**RE-** We will be delving into 2 different enquiry questions for two different faiths this term, Islam and Christianity. In Islam, ‘How does tawhid create a sense of belonging to the Muslim community?’ and in Christianity, ‘Why do Christians believe they are people on a mission?’ The children will further develop their skills in learning **about** religion and learning **from** religion. 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-** We will be developing our coding skills: Year 3 will develop the use of flowcharts and timing systems before designing an interactive game; Year 4 will develop the use of co-ordinates and the “repeat command” and Year 5 will be using decomposing and abstraction techniques and investigate how functions work in code.

**PSHE-** The children will begin to identify what it means to begin and belong; they will discuss what their responsibilities are for keeping themselves and others safe in the classroom and the wider world; how to continue to build strong relationships and how we can make others feel welcome and safe around us. After half term will be investigating how to manage our emotions; to be able to use a good range of vocabulary to describe how we are feeling and to recognise that others’ may react in different ways to their emotions. They will build on their understanding of ‘mental wellbeing’ as being as important as physical wellbeing, and begin to learn about mental ill health. Building on previous work, they will consider their own identity and what is meant by ‘self-respect’.

**Latin-** We are continuing with Latin this year. 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 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. Your child now knows which spelling group they are in and which spellings to look at – I will attach a copy of their weekly spellings to this email.

**Homework:** 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 I 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.

### **HOMEWORK 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](mailto:hhannam@elton.cambs.sch.uk) and [jmurphy@elton.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:jmurphy@elton.cambs.sch.uk) You can contact us with any questions at this addresses and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Warm regards

Mrs Murphy ☺ and Mrs Hannam ☺