

October 2018 Newsletter

Dear Parents

I hope you had a good half-term with the children and enjoyed the short spell of unseasonably good weather. The second half of the autumn term is always very busy as we move towards Christmas so please check the school diary regularly to keep abreast of events between now and the end of term on Friday 21st December.

Please remember that this **Friday the 2nd November is non-uniform day**. Please donate a bottle for the advent fair tombola (this is always a popular stall so the more bottles we can collect the better) in return for not wearing school uniform. **Our second non-uniform day is Friday 16th November**. On this day we are asking for gifts for the advent fair Christmas gift stall. Every gift you make will enable the school to improve the resources, school experiences and the facilities we offer the children. Your support is therefore both much appreciated and needed. The PTFA has committed to supporting the school on a variety of projects this school year including the installation of lockers for KS2 pupils, the refurbishment of our playground activity trail, new tablets for the children to use in both KS1 and KS2 and audio stations for each of our new junior classroom libraries (infant libraries will be introduced during the summer term). This is in addition to substantial annual contributions of £3,500 and £2,000 towards our creative curriculum workshops and outings and our sport enrichment programme which runs across the school from Reception to Y6.

The hard work of your committee and the support which you offer really does make an incredible difference to the learning experiences and opportunities which your children enjoy. Our school is well resourced

and our facilities are excellent; our sport enrichment programme and creative curriculum offer is, to the best of my understanding, unique and unmatched by other primary schools. At a time when school budgets are under immense pressure and reducing in real terms annually (with no light at the end of the tunnel) your support has never been more crucial. Thank you.

Our **Advent Fair will take place on Saturday 1st December** from 12 noon to 4 pm. We look forward to seeing you there.

Good News: Waitrose has contributed £480 to the PTFA as one of its chosen good causes. Thanks to Anna Marie Flanagan for arranging our participation.

Congratulations to our **cross-country team**. Representatives from year groups 4 to 6 took part in this term's event at Copthall and we achieved our best results ever – third in the borough. There were notable performances from Posie and Gabby and Caitlyn in Y5 who came 1st, 2nd and 5th respectively and from Myles in Y6 who came 8th and will now represent Barnet in the London Youth Games to be held next summer! Well done to these children in particular and to the rest of our squad who performed well and with great enthusiasm.

The **Y2 Class Assembly** will take place this Friday 2nd November at 2.50 pm. All parents are welcome to join us.

You are invited to join Fr. Paul at church on Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th November for a special commemoration of the ending of WW1 (7 pm Saturday evening) and our Remembrance Day Service on Sunday 11th November.

This term junior staff have been working hard to establish **new classroom libraries**. Rooms have been reorganised and refurbished to

ensure that every class has an attractive, well stocked, accessible library. We are very pleased with the outcome so far. Further improvements will continue to infant classrooms in the summer term. We are looking to restock our classroom libraries and this is where we would like your help. We would be very grateful to receive books which your children have outgrown. Books need to be in good condition and we are happy to have both fiction and non-fiction selections. Your donations could save us thousands of pounds and enable us to create a really attractive and well stocked library in each classroom.

My thanks to those of you who have sent books in although at the moment donations have been small in number. We are happy to receive your books throughout the year and beyond as and when your children no longer need them. Your support with this would be incredibly helpful and further ease the pressure on school budgets at no cost to yourselves.

There will be a chance for you to see our new classrooms when you attend **parent teacher consultations in November**. These will take place on **Tuesday 20th and Wednesday 21st November**. Booking forms will be circulated this week and appointments will be offered on a first come, first serve basis.

Staffing News: I am very pleased to tell you that Kara Napier has re-joined us this half-term as a full-time member of the teaching team. Miss Napier left us towards the end of the summer term due to the expiry of her visa. Our efforts to sponsor her over the summer were successful (this was the first successful teacher sponsorship application in Barnet and across the London Diocesan Board for Schools in 2018) and she was granted permission to return to the UK to work at St. John's for the foreseeable future from

October 30th. This is great news for her and for the school! Miss Napier will teach Y1 for the remainder of this term and then move into Reception Class for the rest of the school year. Mrs. Woolley will commence maternity leave in January and Mrs. Falana will move to Y1 to job share with Mrs. De Villiers, working two days and three days respectively throughout the spring and summer terms of 2019.

Our staff are our most important resource and we spend a lot of time searching for the right people to work at St. John's. At a time when the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers has never been more challenging in London especially, I consider ourselves very fortunate to have such a dedicated and hard-working team of staff. I am sure that you appreciate all that they do and achieve as much as me.

Scholastic Book Fair returns to school in November. This is a chance for you to buy books for your children and for the school to replenish bookshelves through the commission we receive from your purchases. Thank you for supporting this initiative. Books will be on sale from Friday 16th to Wednesday 21st November.

We had a worrying incident in the playground after school before half-term where a child exhibited unexplained symptoms of **anaphylaxis**. The child had not eaten anything to cause this and we think it possible that she could have come into contact through touch with something which triggered the attack. We have therefore decided to impose a 'no sweets, no snacks' regime (excluding fruit and water/juices) after school from this point onwards. This applies to children attending an after school activity, eg. Barnet F.C. football club (in the past we have permitted the children to have a snack which you have provided before the club commences). If you

wish your child to have a snack after school then this is only allowed once the children have left school premises. Also we will not permit any class food/sweet gifts to celebrate children's birthdays (why not instead donate a book to your child's classroom library with their name and birthday date written on the inside cover!). We know that you will appreciate how important it is to do everything we can to reduce the likelihood of an anaphylactic reaction on school premises and therefore thank you for your support in managing such risk.

Please ensure that you provide healthy eating options for your children for packed lunches, including class outings. Confectionery and fizzy drinks continue to be prohibited on all occasions.

Graham Gunn

30.10.2018