

27th November 2020

Dear Parents,

Free School Meals: If your circumstances have changed recently, for example you may have been furloughed/made redundant, I would strongly encourage you to complete a Free School Meal application as soon as possible. Not only will this provide a free school meal during term time, but there is also financial support for the holiday periods. Please look at the application form attached.

Bike It! Last week, the Year 6 children were asked to apply for the position of “Bike-It-Crew”. I was delighted with the standard of entries, which were innovative and informative. I’m so sorry I couldn’t put you all through as we only had six spaces. Our new Bike-It-Crew are: Eva, James, Oliver, Gracie, Lucy and Nyla. They will be working with our Bike-It Coordinator Laura and I think they will be brilliant ambassadors for encouraging sustainable travel to school.

I heard the parents’ coffee morning was well attended yesterday and some useful ideas and suggestions were made about travelling to school. I am meeting Laura next week and she will feed back to me.

School Building Fund: As you are aware, (from email sent 14th October), as a Voluntary Aided school, we only get 90% of any grants for building work and we have to pay the remaining 10% ourselves. We recently won a bid for £310,000 which is being used to repair our roof (you’ll see lots of scaffolding up next week) and also some necessary asbestos work in the boiler room. The School Building Fund is what is used to pay our 10% liability (we are given a few years to pay it off). We request a voluntary contribution of £45 per family per year and this is paid via ParentPay. Thanks so much to those who have already paid. So far this academic year, we have received £5,488 out of a possible £13,500. If you can make a contribution to this we’d be very grateful. You don’t have to pay it in one go, you can pay a little bit each month on ParentPay. Many thanks in advance for your contributions and please ignore this request if you are in any financial difficulty.

Christmas Filming and Photographs We will be taking photographs of children during this festive period and also filming songs for several Christmas Productions. Any parents who have previously not given consent for their child to be photographed/filmed, will be contacted to seek consent for this purpose. Images will only be accessible via a secure site for parents to see.

School Therapy Dog: We have now received 222 “yes” votes and 6 “no” votes. The reasons given for “no” were “My child is afraid of dogs”, “My child is allergic to dogs” “Another reason”. The school dog would be a cavapoo breed which is hypoallergenic, but if your child has an allergy which could be triggered by this, we need to know. School dogs can be an excellent way to support people who are afraid of dogs, but we need to know who these children are! If you answered no, please would you identify yourselves so we can see if this is a barrier which can be overcome? An email to headteacher@st-monicas.enfield.sch.uk would be great or alternatively phone me at the school office 020 8886 4647. If you don’t contact me by Friday 4th December, I will assume you are happy for us to proceed with the school dog idea.

The Friends: I was delighted to attend The Friends’ meeting on Wednesday evening and hear about how successful this term has been with regards to fund raising. You may not know that The Friends pay for everything that the teachers need to teach your children – site licenses, reading books and all curriculum resources which could be anything from a set of magnets to a set of 30 chromebooks (just arrived!). This is because the school funds we receive are no longer sufficient thanks to government funding formulas! All money raised is therefore absolutely essential and hugely appreciated by the staff.

- **£1,815 was raised at last week’s quiz.** Mrs Derham who hosted it with her husband, is hoping her company will match this funding. Do you work for a company who provides matched funding at charity events? Do let The Friends know if you do!

- Almost **£1,000** has been raised from the Christmas cards and merchandise. The cards have arrived and other merchandise will be coming next week.
- The pre-loved Facebook page for selling items is also going well. Do have a look if you'd like to sell something with proceeds going to The Friends.
- Donations to The Friends are welcome any time! If you would like to make a donation please click here <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/displayCharityCampaignPage.action?campaignId=14818>

Anxieties: We know that lots of people's anxiety will heighten with the easing of lockdown and the advent of the Christmas holidays. There are three Educational Psychologists in Enfield who are offering workshops in December:

- One for parents and carers whose children are feeling anxious, on Tuesday 8th December 8-8.45pm
- One for young people aged 13-18 (if you have a teenager) who are experiencing low mood and/or anxiety, on Tuesday 15th December 7.30-8.15pm

The workshops will focus on practical strategies, and there will be an opportunity for people to ask questions anonymously. Please see the attached fliers which explain how to book a place.

For those of you attending tonight's Charity Poker Night (which incidentally has raised just over **£1,000** so far), may the best man (or woman) win!

The first candle of the Advent wreath will be lit on Sunday and so we will enter into a period of reflection, where we look forward to Christmas and strive to be more and more like Jesus, in everything we think, say and do. You can watch Mass at St Monica's Catholic Church here <https://www.churchservices.tv/palmersgreen>

Have a lovely weekend.

Kind regards
Kate Baptiste
Headteacher