

23rd October 2015

Federation of St Sebastian's and St Cuthbert's

Dear Parents and Children,

It is already half-term, where has the time gone so quickly? It has been an extremely busy "learning" time for both pupils and staff and as always the fantastic parental support we receive is vital for us to reach our potential. This is so true when it comes to attendance and punctuality. To be "outstanding" as individuals and as a school, parents and children need to ensure that we achieve the minimum "school standard" as set by the Government of at least 97%!! We are just over this mark now and this is entirely the responsibility of our children and parents. Next half term let us try to continue to achieve "ABOVE" this "OUTSTANDING STANDARD".

St Sebastian's whole school Attendance from September to half term is **97.8%**

Attendance Prize: ONLY for those children who have achieved 96% attendance. Free tickets have been awarded to our schools to attend the cinema. Schools have to pay for transport. If you do not want your child "who has achieved this attendance mark" to go to the cinema, a pro forma will follow after half term.

Family Learning Week: your children have been ECSTATIC to have their families come into school to watch/join in and see what we do in school a full evaluation will be sent out in the next half term. I hope you have enjoyed your "child's" education world. I can assure you that your attendance has told your child how important they and their education is to you and your family.

First Open Occasion: to meet the class teacher was extremely WELL attended with the majority of parents coming along to look at work we do in class and talk about their own individual child/children. I hope you also found useful the opportunity to speak in a less informed way to the other adults who work with your children, our "invaluable" Teaching Assistants who do support the school and children to "aspire" for EXCELLENCE by their very skilled and professional input to all our children in school. This was an experiment which seems to have been really appreciated by our families. Now let us really work together to enable our children to "SEIZE" their educational and school opportunity to reach their FULL potential. I hope you felt well informed about the ambitions we have for your child/children that are achievable with your support. Our special "enjoyable" gift we can all give to our children is the "LOVE" and "FUN" of Reading. Please continue to read daily/regularly at HOME! This is a "Lifelong" gift of pleasure and learning. After half term we have many exciting projects on reading that I hope you will support and when time is appropriate take part in.

In The News: Health and Well Being of our children and how nationally there is "a real" worry about the physical fitness of our children in this "Computer Game" and "Fast Food" world they are growing up in. CURRICULUM PE is LAW and children (or their parents) CAN NOT decide NOT to do it. In exceptional circumstances with the permission of school this may be allowed (eg broken bones etc). BUT if a child is in school then they are "FIT" to do everything. FAR too many children haven't got or don't bother to bring in their PE kit. Parents will receive a call to ask for the PE kit to be brought in or to come and look after their child during the lessons (swimming included). We are here to "teach" your child NOT to babysit. If UNWELL they should not be in school.

Safeguarding issues in school: we have been dealing with and been in conversation with parents and children about safety and ensuring your "children" are safe. I do "apologise" on behalf of myself and staff where we have disappointed our parents on this point. May I explain that "full" investigations with Governors involvement is necessary when either the school or parents have concerns or complaints are made. BUT I want to reassure all parents that we listen, we tell the truth and we act. After half term a variety of "different" measures will be introduced on The Field of Dreams site and school site.

Field of Dreams:

A "Parent line" to stand behind when dropping off or picking up.

The electronic gate: the release button must be pressed at the same time as pulling open the door.

Parents please close all gates behind you.

IF electronic gate is left open a light will start flashing after a delay (15 seconds) in the Field of Dreams Nursery, Foundation Unit and After School room.

Parents who wish to speak to Foundation stage staff at picking up time MUST wait until ALL other children are released safely to their parents/guardians.

School site:

A "Parent line" that BOTH in the MORNING and at PICKING UP TIME parents stay behind. We MUST stop parents walking and standing on the CHILDREN'S YARD.

At the whistle ONLY children should be walking to their lines.

Parents who wish to speak to teachers go to main office BEFORE lining up, as this is time to be concentrating on safety of ALL pupils.

Many many thanks to the variety of people especially parents who have taken the time and told us what they think about our safety procedure. I have asked a Lead Ofsted Inspector to make an unannounced visit and observe our procedures. This will be a "health check" to ensure we are safe for our children. Parents and school have clear responsibilities to ensure the safety of our children.

Offensive and Inappropriate use of everyday home/school equipment will be dealt with in the severest manner and will lead to an exclusion under the discretion of the Head Teacher/ Head of School and Governors. This may also lead to a permanent exclusion (expelled). We do deal with incidents of items being brought into school from home e.g. pencils, scissors, rulers etc. These will be dealt with in an appropriate manner which is un-alarming or over dramatic. It is important that our children know what is right and wrong in this regard and we try to investigate and inform those who may be immediately affected.

Both Schools – Staff Departures

Sarah: from Foundation unit has been a supply teacher with us and has decided to look at other options. We are really grateful for the time she has given the children who really had a great relationship with her.

Niamh – A Yr. 2 teacher based at St Cuthbert's who has decided to return to Ireland to seek a teaching job. Over the years she has been with us and has been a fantastic support to this year group and Key Stage 1 across the federation. She goes with our thanks and prayers. The staff and children will miss her.

Mrs Bellis-Knox begins her maternity leave on 1st November. As the head of School of St Cuthbert's and an Executive Deputy Head Teacher across the federation she has done an exceptional job for all of our children across the 2 schools. She will be missed by us all and I know everyone wishes her well and will continue to pray as she prepares for the birth of her first child.

To all staff and children, thank you, have a good and safe half term and come back ready to continue your "Learning Journey" together as a family and school. Many thanks to all for your continued support to make our schools OUTSTANDING for all of our children.

Dennis Hardiman