

Federation of St Cuthbert's and St Sebastian's Catholic Primary Schools

18th September 2018,

Dear Parents/Guardians,

A warm welcome back. I want to congratulate you on how well turned out the children look. It does make the children feel proud of themselves and their schools. Thank you for this.

All Personal Belongings need to be labelled. We understand you have spent a lot of money getting items of uniform ready but they do all look the same. Please ensure they are labelled with names etc. As stated on our websites, "Please note the school cannot accept any responsibility for any lost personal items." We are not liable to financially compensate for any missing items so please ensure you work with us. We do have lost property and are happy to give out when requested.

School Rules. You have chosen this school, which has had the same rules for many years so please support us and work with us. In particular, **no earrings** should be worn. If your child wears earrings, please ensure they are covered up at all times. **Long hair** (above collar length) needs to be tied up for the whole time whilst in school. **"Extreme" hair styles, dyes, razor cuts, fashion styles** (more so boys, in recent years) are not allowed. **No make-up, fashion items on wrists, false nails, eyelashes, painted nails; jewellery items** are also not allowed. These are simple rules, which recognise our purpose, to keep children safe in word and deed, providing them with an education that will support them all their life.

School Budgets. As you know, in your home you try to make your money go as far as possible, providing everything you need. For school, it works the same. However, although over many years, we have made our budgets work providing great educational experiences, in and out of school, whilst maintaining high standards; this is now proving extremely difficult. In real terms, the funds given by Government have been reduced over many years. Schools all over the country are drastically going to a 4.5-day week, even asking parents to contribute cleaning materials, pens, pencils, toiletries etc. We are not at this stage but we will go without this year, as I have had to reduce expenditure by a $\frac{1}{4}$ in some areas. A small number of issues has not helped this:

1. We have allowed parents to "owe" money on a short-term basis via mutually agreed commitment. Unfortunately, some of our parents have then, not carried out their commitment. Sadly, this amounts to £1000.00. This is owed to **our** children's education. This will not be allowed to continue as your children are entitled to every single penny.
2. Voluntary contribution "means" just that. However, if we do not cover the cost of a trip, we have to cancel it. We never overprice a trip; we simply try to cover costs. Please

note, too many parents have not followed through on their commitment to make a voluntary contribution.

3. School Levy. As Catholic schools, we do not get certain government funds because we are a little independent of certain regulations, which we want as a Church school. The Archdiocese asks for a contribution from families to ensure it can continue to financially support its schools. When we receive this bill if we have not received enough Levy payments we have to make up the shortfall from our school budgets. We have received **so much** from this Levy e.g.

St Sebastian's - Last 7 years

- i. New roof over £200,000
- ii. New boiler system over £120,000
- iii. Renovation of whole school, extension of every classroom including electrics, fire alarms close to 1 million.
- iv. Summer 2018, boundary wall, which was about to collapse on to the Field of Dreams building, taken down and replaced £190,000.
- v. New astro turf after 15 years is needed. School cannot afford the £28000 (some quotes were £54000). The PTA are unable so we may need to close it unless we can find external funding to support our contribution.
- vi. All paid by the Archdiocese through Levy contributions. All of this adds to the quality of education provided for our children.

St Cuthbert's - since Federation

- i. Complete renovation of all areas of school, except boilers, includes electrics, plumbing, painting, classroom investment cost £750,000.
- ii. Roof repairs £75000
- iii. Heating maintenance to keep boilers from breaking down £50000.
- iv. Boundary fencing and gates to safeguard our children £50000
- v. New toilets
- vi. Support with early years garden and forest school including donating land.
- vii. Fully supportive of making our new school the best it can be. Already the government have made cuts to what we can have. However, our Archdiocese (through the levy) are committed to ensuring we have everything we need. They have already said the only "moveable" item that can be transferred to new school is a piano! This will be a huge financial commitment as well as time and energy. They will give St Cuthbert's children in the region of £100,000's to ensure we have quality provision.

So what does this mean?

- a) Already, we have had to cancel year 6 residential because we costed on all going and making voluntary contributions. However, we knew we would not get the money requested and have no resources to subsidise.

- b) We are asking parents to pay in advance for music tuition otherwise; this cannot take place as we employ external music teachers from a music hub at considerable cost to the school. Please ensure you return your pro-forma and payment by 1st October 2018 as we have pupils on our reserve list who will then be given the opportunity.
- c) We will continue to plan exciting trips and opportunities but will expect you to honour your financial commitment at least 2 weeks before; otherwise, we will have to cancel.
- d) We will seek other contributions to reduce parent's contributions e.g. PTA, SVP and other outside agencies. However, if these cannot support, unfortunately the school budgets cannot fill this financial gap.
- e) Follow-up on moneys owed via class dojo, letters, meetings and finally our solicitors who will pass on their costs to you. If we had received all financial commitments, we could have offered a free trip, with no contributions. Obviously very frustrating for our school community. We continue to be very sensitive to family circumstances and set up mutually agreed payments plans when appropriate. We will always work with you if we have your support and commitment.

I apologise for the length of this explanation but I feel you have a right to know the seriousness in which the governors and I consider these matters.

You, our parents and guardians, and the support you give to our schools and children, is the most powerful ingredient in their success. Our partnership can and should be strong and trusting with our children in the centre of everything we do.

Have a happy, enjoyable and successful school year ahead.

Mrs Bellis-Knox
 Head of School
 St Cuthbert's
 Senior Leadership Team
 Federation

Mr Hardiman, M.B.E.
 Executive Head Teacher
 Senior Leadership Team
 Federation

Mrs Mulligan
 Head of School
 St Sebastian's
 Senior Leadership Team
 Federation