Friday 6th September 2024

Dear Parents / Carers,

I hope that you had a lovely summer break and managed to spend some lovely restful time together with your children. We are delighted to have them all back in school and they have all returned so happy and ready to learn.

**Staffing Updates: A message from Mrs Watanabe.**

My Name is Mrs Watanabe and I am the new Deputy Headteacher and SENCo here at St Bede’s. I have had the most wonderful first week here at school!

I have loved meeting lots of you at the school gates each morning and afternoon and wanted to thank you all so much for making me feel so welcome.

This week, I have really enjoyed getting to know all of your fabulous children and I am looking forward to working with them this term. I feel very honoured to be part of such a fantastic school community. Please do not hesitate to catch me at the gate or come to the office to arrange a meeting if you have any concerns about your child.

Thank you again, Mrs Watanabe.

Miss Cummings, who many of you will know from the Admin team, had her baby this week. She has had a little boy and we send congratulations to her and her husband.

Mrs Walton will be taking over the role as Business Manager in the office during her maternity leave, with Miss Trow giving some office support during some of the school day.

**Ethos and Behaviour:**

Ethos, behaviour and well-being are crucial in providing a flourishing school community. Children need to feel happy, safe and secure before optimal learning can take place and staff also work more effectively in an environment where they feel happy, safe and valued. Behaviour in St Bede’s is generally very good, particularly within lesson times however sometimes things go wrong during unstructured times such as breaktimes, lunchtimes or transition times. With this in mind, we have refocused our attention on our key drivers from our ‘Ethos and Behaviour Policy’, ‘Being Ready, Being Respectful, Being Safe’. You will probably already be aware of this phrase, and many of your children will have come home wearing a ‘ready’, ‘respectful’ or ‘safe’ sticker. We have been working closely with all staff, teaching and non-teaching, to develop a common language to help to strengthen a consistent approach and the children are really rising to the positive approach.

As part of our ‘Ethos and Behaviour’ approach we continue to use ‘Thrive’ (which is a positive approach to managing behaviour) and a restorative approach (whereby we try to talk to children about inappropriate or challenging behaviour to help them to understand why they reacted this way, the effects on themselves and others, how they can resolve the situation and what they could do next time if the same situation arose – we will share more information with you with regards to this as we progress through the term).

**Parish News:**

Some of you will be aware that Father Paul is no longer the Parish Priest at St Bede’s. He has returned to his own Diocese of Nottingham after serving three years in our Diocese. Father Paul was very supportive of school life both in relation to his role as Parish Priest and also in his role as one of our Governors. We wish him luck and send our prayers with his as he begins his new role.

We will soon have a new Parish Priest, Father Mariadass, who some of you may already know from English Martyrs Church. Father Mariadass will be Parish Priest at St Bede’s, St George’s and St Roberts, however he will be living here in our Parish. We look forward to welcoming him to St Bede’s and hope to be able to welcome you to our school Masses once Father Mariadass is settled in.

**‘Cuppa and Catch-Up’ - Friday Coffee Morning:**

We are introducing a weekly coffee morning each Friday morning, in the school hall, starting next Friday (13th September) from 8.50am – 10.00am. This will be facilitated by Mrs Watanabe, Mrs Howell or myself and will be a regular opportunity for parents to drop in for a ‘cuppa and a catch up’ with each other. The general idea is simply to create an opportunity for parents / carers to have a space to talk with each other however some weeks we will be organising a ‘drop in’ visitor to talk with parents such as the school nurse, the Educational Psychologist or simply an opportunity for one of us to share some information with you linked to SEND or another key areas. I will be asking you for your ideas of topics, areas or drop in visitors that you would like to be included in these sessions.

We would be delighted if you could come along and support this venture and I am sure that it will be a lovely opportunity to strengthen our school community – all are welcome! Please come along and bring a friend!

Mrs Jill Sandeman, our Educational Psychologist will be popping in to the ‘Cuppa and Catch Up’ session on Friday 20th September to talk with parents about ‘Emotional Coaching’ (a session that she shared with parents last year which was a great success).

**Attendance and Punctuality:**

Polite reminder, it is essential that you inform school immediately, on the first day, if your child is absent due to ill health. Can you please contact school each day of absence to keep us informed. Can I also remind parents that school opens from 8.40am each morning, with the official start time being 8.50am. If your child arrives after 8.50am they will receive a late mark – we have had a number of late children during our first week back at school and hope that this will reduce as time moves forward.

**Parking Reminder:**

Can I politely remind parents to think carefully about where they park their cars during drop off and pick up. Whenever possible, please either walk to school or park further away from school to avoid congestion for our neighbours. I have already had a number of complaints from residents on Whickham View and Howlett Hall Road with regard to inconsiderate parking from parents who are blocking their driveways. Please always be mindful that our neighbours need access to their own driveways and may have children of their own to drop off / pick up and you are preventing them from doing so if you block their driveway.

**GEMS After-School Wrap Around Care Provision:**

We are working closely with the new GEMS provider who is working out of the old dance studio next door to school and is offering wrap around care until 6pm. Any parent who is interested in finding out more information should contact the school office.

**Asda Rewards:**

If you shop at Asda please nominate our school in the Asda Rewards Scheme. School will receive a percentage of any money spent and all money received will help to support teaching and learning and enrichment activities for your children.

**PE Days:**

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| PE Days |
| Reception | Friday |  |
| Year 1 | Wednesday | Thursday  |
| Year 2 | Tuesday | Thursday |
| Year 3 | Wednesday | Thursday |
| Year 4 | Monday | Tuesday |
| Year 5 | Monday | Tuesday |
| Year 6 | Tuesday | Wednesday  |

**Forthcoming Events:**

* Parish Coffee Morning: Sunday 8th September, immediately after Mass, we will be holding our monthly Parish coffee morning. Come along for a coffee and a game of bingo.
* After-School Enrichment Activities: After school clubs will be commencing next week (week beginning 9th September). Information regarding this has been sent out via Parentpay. As always, after school clubs are offered on a first come, first served basis and children who are not allocated a place will be added to the waiting list if someone drops out.
* Year 6 Outdoor Adventure Residential: Monday 16th September – Wednesday 18th September, Year 6 will be going to Robinwood Activity Centre to take part in some action-packed days of team building and fun.
* Year 1 Forest School Experience: Following the success of Forest School for our EYFS children last year, we are planning a six-week block of weekly class visits to Scotswood Garden Forest School for our Year 1 children. This will take place on a Wednesday morning starting on Wednesday 18th September (further information to follow).
* PTA ‘Sweet Treats’ stall: On 20th September our dedicated PTA members will be running a ‘Sweet Treats’ stall in the yard after school (further information to follow).
* Curriculum Evenings: Week commencing 23rd September, each class teacher will be holding a short information sharing meeting (30-45mins) in their classroom for all parents to attend. This is a really important meeting for parents to attend so please make every effort to be there. It is an opportunity to meet with your child’s class teacher and an important opportunity to staff to share key information with regards to your child’s learning.

 This is a meeting for parents and should not be attended with children. If you have

 children in multiple classes and are struggling to attend both meetings, please let the

 office staff know.

 The EYFS team will organise a date for their curriculum meeting once the children

 are all settled into their new class.

 Year 1: Tuesday 24th September 4.00pm

 Year 2: Tuesday 24th September 4.00pm

 Year 3: Monday 23rd September 4.00pm

 Year 4: Monday 23rd September 4.00pm

 Year 5: Monday 23rd September 4.00pm

 Year 6: Monday 23rd September 4.00pm

* Year 6 Welcome Mass: We are hoping to invite parents to our Year 6 Welcome Mass in September at 10.00am (the date / time is to be confirmed once Father Mariadass is in position).
* Year 4 visit to BalletLorent: On Wednesday 25th September, Year 4 will be attending the BalletLorent Studio on Whickham View to watch their show ‘Snow White’. This event is free for the children and will be followed up in school by some workshop sessions delivered by the team from BalletLorent later on in the half-term.
* School Book Fair: Week commencing 30th September (further information to follow).
* EYFS and Year 6 Liturgy: On Wednesday 2nd October at 2.30pm, we hope to invite EYFS and Year 6 parents along to a prayerful gathering, held in our school hall, led by our eldest children to welcome our youngest and newest children to our school community. (date and time to be confirmed).
* Parish Coffee Morning: Sunday 6th October, immediately after Mass, we will be holding our monthly Parish coffee morning. Come along for a coffee and a raffle.
* Harvest Festival collection: As usual, we will be opening up our ‘harvest festival’ collection at the start of October. Our families are always so generous in donating tins and dried goods to help to support those less fortunate than ourselves. We will be donating the food to the elderly within our Parish, the local Asylum Seekers Project (run by the Justice and Peace Group from our Parish) and to the local foodbank. Further information to follow from our Mini-Vinnies.
* Year 5 Harvest Festival Mass: We are hoping to invite parents to our Year 5 Harvest Mass on Wednesday 16th October at 10.00am (this date / time is to be confirmed once Father Mariadass is in position).
* Year 6 visit to Safety Works: On Monday 21st October, Year 6 will be going to Safety Works on a visit. Safety Works is an excellent community organisation which provides valuable information through fun learning experiences to help to keep our young people safe. This visit is free to children.
* Individual Parent’s Meetings will be scheduled for the last week of the half term. Again, it is essential that you make every effort to attend as this is an important opportunity to gain personal information with regard to your child and how they have settled into their new class, how they are doing in relation to their learning and how we can work together as ‘home and school’ who help your child to reach their full potential. Further information to follow)
* Spooky Disco: Our PTA group will be organising a ‘Spooky Disco’ for EYFS / KS1 and a second event for KS2 later this half term (further information to follow).
* Staff INSET Day: As highlighted on our school calendar, which you received at the end of last academic year, school is closed to children on Thursday 24th October for staff training. We are also closed (to children and staff) on Friday 25th October (this is an additional holiday date – we are hoping that this may facilitate parents with booking cheaper holidays during official school holiday time and may reduce the need for holidays being booked during term time).

I look forward to a successful half-term and year ahead.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, or a member of the Admin team, if you have any questions with regard to any of the information in this newsletter.

Kind regards

Mrs Young

(Headteacher)