

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the new school year of 2013-2014.

We were delighted to see the children in school this week looking so smart and ready to learn - they are an absolute credit to you. We hope you enjoyed a lovely summer break. We extend a special welcome to our new children and families in the Foundation Class and to those children and families in year groups further up the school who have transferred to us. We look forward to working with your family over the next few years. We also welcome our new teacher Miss Cree who has joined us this year and will be teaching Year 4.

This will also be my last term as Head teacher of St Joseph's - a position I have thoroughly enjoyed since 1999, as I will be retiring in January. Mrs. Pink has successfully been appointed to the headship of St Joseph's and will be continuing to lead the wonderful group of children and staff that work here. Mrs. Briggs has a new role as Leader of Teaching and Learning and Mrs. Murdie will be teaching Year 6 each Wednesday. As part of the government's Sports funding, we have been able to appoint Mr. Simon Dungworth to support the teaching of PE in school and to continue his lunchtime and after school clubs.

The staff car park has been extended and resurfaced over the summer break and a new entrance porch is presently being built. These will improve our safeguarding arrangements. The field at the side of the car park is now fenced so that children can safely use it and visitors are able to wait in the entrance porch before entering school. Alternative arrangements for visitors and deliveries have been made until the work is completed. A school fire drill will also be held to accommodate the changes.

As we are at the beginning of the school year, here are some of the things you need to think about:

#### **Arriving at school in the morning and collection in the afternoon**

External doors will close at 9.00am; the adult responsible for bringing them to school must sign in children arriving after this time at the school office. Arrival after 9.00am will mean the child is marked 'late' in the register.

The external doors open at 8.50am - and the class teachers always set 'early work'. Children who consistently arrive either late or just before the doors close at 9.00am are missing out on 15 minutes of learning daily - one and a quarter hours per week and over the school year - about 50 hours of extra learning!

We would prefer all children to arrive as close to 8.50am as possible-- we expect sensible, polite, responsible behaviour from all children accompanied or independent and before this time the children are still the responsibility of their parents. Ball games and rough play is not appropriate on the playground before or after school. At the end of the day, 3.15pm, we understand that there are occasional emergencies or unforeseen problems where parents are delayed and children wait beside the school office - this is not a problem and we are happy to help. However, a late pickup cannot become 'the norm' or an expectation. If parents are unable to pick up their children on time - on a regular

basis -then they must make alternative arrangements.

REMINDER - ALL CHILDREN SHOULD REMAIN WITH THEIR PARENTS ON THE PLAYGROUND AT THE END OF THE DAY. THE FIELD SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A PLAY AREA. PARENTS/CARERS MUST SUPERVISE THEIR OWN CHILDREN ONCE THEY HAVE COLLECTED THEM.

### **Holidays during school time**

We do try to be as flexible as possible as we understand the challenges involved in juggling work commitments, budgets and family life, but our priority must remain the continuity, consistency and quality of the children's education. Our guidelines for when holidays will be authorised are very clear, so we thought it would be useful to those who are considering booking their holidays to publish them again here:

*A request for leave of absence will not be authorised if:*

- a leave of absence has already been taken during the school year
- the request is within 2 weeks of SATs or of other formal assessment periods
- the request is within the first 2 weeks of a new term
- the child's attendance would fall below the 95% target required in our school

*Please note: the child's attendance during the previous year will be taken into consideration when requests for leave of absence are made in the September to October half-term*

The Governors of St Joseph's are planning to set up an Attendance Panel which will support families of children who are experiencing problems with attendance or are consistently late.

### **School Uniform**

Please make sure your child is wearing the correct uniform and has indoor pumps and sensible outdoor shoes. They also need their PE kit in school.

### **Dinner Money**

Money must be sent in a clearly marked envelope on Monday.

### **Packed Lunches and mid-morning snacks**

Following the Government's Healthy School Guidelines there must be no fizzy drinks in school lunches. Thank you for observing this. Sweets and chocolate are not allowed as part of a packed lunch, although a chocolate-coated biscuit is the exception.

Key Stage 1 children are provided with a piece of fruit and FS2 also have a drink of milk as part of the Government's 'Free Fruit for schools scheme. KS2 children are allowed to bring in a piece of fruit and purchase milk. We encourage the children to eat healthy food and to make healthy lifestyle choices.

### **Reading Matters**

Whatever walk of life your child chooses in the future, one thing is clear - reading will

always be an essential skill. Please limit the DS, the Play Station and other electronic devices during term time and make time to read to and with your child; this should continue right up to Year 6 and beyond.

### **Appropriate media**

It is harder for parents to protect children from the influence of the media. During this summer there have been far too many reports of cyber bullying resulting in children taking their own life. Whilst TV is fairly straightforward to 'police', personal gadgets such as Internet phones make it more difficult to monitor what your child is accessing and who they are communicating with. It is essential for the safety and wellbeing of children that adults keep them safe in the virtual world - one where often children's skills are overtaking their parents! In the same vein - games and films are given 'ratings' for a good reason and children should not be exposed to material, which is deemed unsuitable. We are often quite shocked to hear children talking to their friends about what they have played or watched.

### **After School Clubs**

Clubs begin on Wk Beginning 16<sup>th</sup> September. Performing Arts however will start on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September. A list of clubs being run will be sent home. We are unable to accommodate every child's first choice, there are simply not enough places - but we try to ensure children are given one of their choices. FS2 children will be given access to after school clubs after Christmas.

### **Golden Book Certificates.**

These will now be given out by the staff in Mass on Thursday mornings. Please join us if you can.

### **Diary Dates**

Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> September	Performing Arts Begins
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> September	Year 6 Crucial Crewe visit
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> September	Y5 Mass
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> September	School Closed INSET day
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> September	School Closed INSET day
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> September	Sue Horton E Safety talk- 2pm in the hall
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> September	Macmillan Coffee Morning- more details to follow
Wk beginning 7 <sup>th</sup> October	Jump Rope for Heart
Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> October	Harvest Festival in church
Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> October	School Closes for half term

All Classes will be sending their termly newsletters within the next week. Our weekly Newsletter will be sent on a Friday from now on.