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9th November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been great to see your children back in school and, in particular, to see them engaging with their learning and each other once again. We are all coming to terms with the fact that this year is going to feel very different to previous years. One of the changes within school is going to be the absence of the usual PTA events such as the weekly cake sales, school discos, film nights and the legendary Christmas Fair. This is clearly a great shame as children and parents alike really enjoy coming together as a community and sharing the social aspect of these occasions. However, there is a further implication, as these events also make a significant contribution to the PTA funds which, in turn, support the school in providing for the children. Without the annual calendar of events this will inevitably lead to a (not insubstantial) hole in our school budget.

The St. John's PTA and community has always done a fantastic job raising staggering amounts of money for the school. Our regular calendar of events would normally raise over £16,000 in a year. This money helps your PTA to fund regular requirements such as purchasing classroom resources, updating library stock and providing class budgets that enable teachers to buy the additional equipment and resources that enhance what is achievable in the classroom - all of these enrich the children's daily lives in school.

In addition, the PTA have also funded larger specific projects, most recently the redevelopment of the school playgrounds and before that, the purchase of school IT equipment.

This year we are no less ambitious and hope to redevelop the Forest School Area at Worrall Road; never has it been more crucial to maximise the outside space we have available. Doing so will mean that the space can be used for Forest School lessons all year round (without requiring the 'rest' it currently needs in the winter) and will also mean that the children on the Worrall Road site will be able to use the space during their playtimes/lunchtimes. Plans are in their infancy but I'm sure you'll agree that it would be fantastic to be able to enjoy the use of this space more regularly and by more children.

We are highly aware that the recent months have been a very difficult time for many families, and it may not be possible for people to consider donating money to the PTA at the moment. However, for those who do feel they would like to continue to support fundraising for St John's PTA during this critical time, the Acorn Fund is an easy way of doing so. The easiest way to contribute to the Acorn Fund is via online bank transfer. You can either set up a standing order for a monthly donation or make a one-off payment by following the instructions and completing the information in the google form below. As the St John's School PTA is a registered charity, if you are a UK taxpayer, you can Gift Aid your donation by agreeing to the 'Gift Aid Declaration' within the on-line form. This will boost your donation by 25% at no extra cost to you!

<https://forms.gle/8u1qYJuDFMq8jftL8>

There is also the opportunity to donate ad hoc throughout the year via both ParentPay (click on 'Pay for other items'), and ParentMail (click on 'Payments' and 'Shop'). Please consider this when making payments for special activities or school lunches online.

If you feel able to continue to support the PTA this year, we would be relieved and extremely grateful. Why not consider how much you would normally spend at the various events throughout the year and arrange your donation on this basis? With your help, we can continue to fund the projects, resources and equipment your children deserve. Even though many things have changed, our ambition remains, but we can only achieve this with your generosity through the PTA. Thank you.

Kind regards

Justin
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