

Dear Parents and Carers,

A fine bright winter's morning for the first day of the Spring Term that sees everyone back together and looking forward to hearing all of the news from the Christmas celebrations. May I, on behalf of all of the staff and governors, wish you all a very happy new year and every good wish for 2018. It is good to see all of the children bright and happy and as full of energy as ever, eager to meet up with their classmates and teachers. There is a lovely buzz around the school and we have a lot to be thankful for and to look ahead to in 2018. It is always good to get back to normal and we have a very busy and rather short term ahead of us with half term only five weeks away and Easter Sunday set for April 1st this year. All the more important to get cracking quickly then!

Firstly though, we must look back for a moment to pass on the gratitude of staff at all levels for the lovely Christmas gifts and cards they received from the children and their families prior to the end of term. It was overwhelming as usual and I have been asked to make sure that everyone knows just how appreciative and touched staff at the great kindness shown. Thank you for your generosity and the kind words especially - they give everyone a lift.

It is very noticeable that many of the children have new coats, hats, scarves and gloves and it would be such a big help to see that these items are clearly marked with names or at the very least, initials. This is something that I do mention regularly and there has been some improvement but frankly, not enough! It is such a shame to see items go astray but this is often the case.

Levels of punctuality are high and almost all pupils are in on the bell and ready to learn from 9am, this is good news but there are some children who could arrive just a few minutes earlier each day and this may be a suitable new year's resolution. To have everyone in on time every day would be great news.

A special word of praise to our Y6 children and Miss Carrahar who were in earlier than usual on this very first day of the new term - well done everyone and keep up the good work!

With regard to our September intake please note that the closing date for applications for September 2018 is Monday 15th January at 4.30pm sharp. Please make sure that you apply in good time if you have an eligible child and spread the word if you can to friends and relatives as every year we have families who miss out because they forgot about the deadline. If anyone is unsure about the process or who has any questions, please contact Mrs Rochford and she will be happy to help. The governors will look to have the main admissions meeting in or around mid-February. This will be for September admission to our Reception class and also for any in year pupil transfers. All applicants will find out if they have been successful or not on April 16th.

A reminder that milk money is due for all parents / carers who pay termly: (£9.10).

Dinner money remains the same at £2.10 per day or £10.50 per week.

Looking further ahead our Y5 trip to Thurston will take place from March 12th - 16th and even further ahead, the Y6 residential to Berwick / Edinburgh is scheduled for June 25th - 27th. The Y6 trip is a real rite of passage and everyone should really try to come along. Last year almost all the children went and everyone had a smashing time. You only get the one chance for a Y6 end of term residential and no one should miss out. Last year we had a lot of last minute additions to the party and fortunately the hostel had places so no one was disappointed, however we may not be so lucky this time so please get your names down as soon as possible. We will be holding a special meeting for children and parents / carers to outline the trip in detail before too long, so look out for this Y6.

A word regarding the Local Authority website in relation to St Gregory's school holidays: At the minute the In Service days are correctly listed but there is one mistake - please note that we are definitely in school on Friday May 25th - the last day before Summer half term. The school has contacted the LA to rectify this error.

Please make a note of the following dates and events in your diaries or add to your calendars:

Excellence and Enjoyment Themed Weeks / Activities:

- Week 1: January 8th - 12th KS1: Books and Authors - Maths through Story focus
- Week 2: February 19th - 23rd: Fair Trade / Refugees with a Maths twist!
- Creativity / Pupils Choice Day: March 23rd

February 6th: Y6 Lego linked visit to O Zone.

Friday February 9th: Staff CPD day with RC Catholic Cluster Schools: School closed to pupils.

Therefore the HALF TERM break for children will commence at close of school on Thursday February 8th and last until school resumes at the usual time on Monday February 19th.

Main Admission Meeting; Thursday February 22 at 2pm (TBC)

Friday Feb 23rd: Grego Lego Team leave for the National Finals in Bristol. Saturday February 24th is the date of the competition and the children will return on Sunday February 24th by 3pm.

Wednesday March 7th: Local Authority School Review: All Day

Monday March 12 - 16th: Y6 Thurston Experience Residential

Monday March 12th - 16th: Link Governor Week

Monday March 19th - Thursday March 22nd - OPEN EVENINGS (individual appointment times nearer the date). **Please note that there will be NO after school clubs this week other than Karate on the Friday.**

Monday March 26th - Thursday March 29th: Holy Week:

EASTER HOLIDAYS: From close of school on Thursday March 26th until Monday Morning April 16th at the usual time.

Parish Based First Communion Programme will continue as per the previously published dates. Please liaise with Father Weymes or Mrs Fenwick if you have any queries.

We anticipate at least one Mass for Lent and another nearer the end of term as part of our Easter celebrations: Father Weymes will confirm as soon as possible.

Notifications regarding After School Clubs will be sent out in the course of the week with a view to starting next week.

I look forward to seeing you as the term progresses.

Best Wishes.

Yours Sincerely,

K J Smithson.

Head Teacher.