

Dear Parents and Carers.

First of all a look back to a couple of weeks ago when I and a number of staff were lucky enough to get a table at the South Tyneside Awards ceremony held at Temple Park. This was the first event I had attended and a very swish occasion it was with a lot of awards in a range of categories given to people who had achieved so well across the past year. For us there was only one award that we were really excited about with our own Miss Elaine Carrahar being nominated for "Teacher of the Year" and there was some tension in the air when the result was about to be announced. I am delighted to say that Miss Carrahar was successful and if ever a reward was richly deserved it was this one. I know that this has already been shared on the school website and via the children who gave her the biggest three cheers we have heard in the hall for some time, but just in case anyone missed the news, here it is in the newsletter. Well Done Miss Carrahar - we are all proud of you.

Of course at the moment Y6 and Miss Carrahar are working hard in the build up to the SATS which commence on Monday May 14th and I have to say that preparations are going well and the whole atmosphere has been calm and focused. Y6 can be assured to have the most special attention across that week and the time will, as it always does, fly past. Home / School support has been excellent and I am sure we will be working closely together prior to and across the week to enable the children to do their best. It's still and early to bed, plenty fresh air and reduced screen time for now please!

Our Y2 children will also be working through their series of End KS1 tests with their teachers across the month of May, but these are very much factored into the routine of the day and again, the children are well prepared, though good attendance is essential, especially across the last two weeks.

As is usually the case during the summer term, requests for holiday forms increase and more often than not these have to be refused as the criteria for holidays in school time is so strict. "Exceptional Circumstances" means just that. However every request is looked at carefully and the school does know its families well. It is important that forms are filled in and requests made because even if ultimately we have to turn the request down it does mean that everything is over and above board and we don't have to have any unpleasantness with children who have clearly been away on holiday, made uncomfortable because the school has been informed that children have been unwell. Unfortunately this still happens from time to time and instances such as these can very easily be brought to the attention of the Local Authority Education Welfare Team who are very keen to crack down on unauthorised absence.

On the positive side, attendance has improved across the early part of the summer term and it was good to see Y6 top the table this week and get a full extra day in the MUGA.

Father Weymes has been into school recently and we have agreed dates for two school masses later in the term:

- Tuesday June 5th at 09.30 (This is our first day back after the half term break)
- Thursday July 19th at 2.30 - Last Mass of the Academic Year

As always everyone is very welcome to attend and it has been good to see some of our local parishioners turning up for Mass in the school hall - we hope that this continues.

Looking ahead, I have been asked to mention a charity football match that is to take place on Wednesday May 9th, kick off at 5p. South Tyneside Police, along with special guest Martin Waghorn, the current Ipswich centre forward and ex Sunderland and Rangers player, will play a team from the Bangladeshi Community to raise funds for a local disabled football team. It will be a real fun event with games, stalls and a range of activities designed for all of the family. The match is being held at Mariners Park, the home of champions South Shields and everyone is welcome. Admission is only a £1 for adults with children admitted free, with all funds raised donated to this very good cause. I am sure that it will be a good evening out especially if the weather is kind. Good luck to all involved.

A reminder that the school will be closed for the May Bank Holiday on Monday and will reopen at the usual time on Tuesday May 8th.

Looking further ahead the 2018/19 School Holiday Dates are already on the council website and mirror those of St Wilfrid's and other local schools. Some Staff CPD days need to be added but I can confirm now that the first Monday after the holidays, September 3rd, will be an In Service Day for staff and the school will open for pupils on Tuesday September 4th - a long way off thank goodness!

Best Wishes.

Yours sincerely,

K J Smithson

Head Teacher.