

Dear Parents and Carers,

The Spring term is well underway now with January almost behind us and everything seems to be running well to date in each class across the school. Mrs Squares has soon settled down to life in Y5 and has made a very good start with her new class. She has been warmly welcomed and very much appreciates being here at St Gregory's meaning that Y5 can look forward to a settled period. Progress is also well underway with the Deputy Head Teacher recruitment programme and by half term we should be able to confirm that all arrangements are complete and our staffing complement will be secure for the foreseeable future. Governors are working hard to see that this is the case and are being assisted by Diocesan and Local Authority advisers as is the norm with such a senior appointment.

The recent cold snap has reminded us that winter is very much still with us and it is good to see that the children are well turned out in hats, coats and gloves. We usually do try to get the children out at playtimes so it is very important that they are dressed warmly. Children who attend sports clubs such as athletics or football should always bring an additional warm top tracksuit / joggers etc. We will always try to keep parents / carers informed if a session is to be postponed. The MUGA is very prone to ice and can be dangerous in this type of weather. Can I again ask that all clothing is marked with the child's name please as we have a growing pile of items from children of all ages that we cannot return to their rightful owners? (And this has increased since we returned in January) We will look to display some of the items; water bottles etc. on table tops prior to half term and feel free to rummage through!

Our very successful Lego League team had a nice surprise the other day - a signed photograph and message from Tim Peake, the astronaut, thanking them for their suggestion of how to avoid space sickness on the long flights. Having the medicine in little jelly cubes! What a good suggestion from the team and they were thrilled with his response.

Next week is Internet Safety week and Mrs Blackwood will be presenting the very latest updates to the children in a special assembly. I know that this is something that we take very seriously given the increasing amount of time the children spend on line and on "screen time" generally. It is always worth discussing what they have learned and emphasising those important messages. You may find that the children can help parents / carers too as we progress through this increasingly digital age together. One question we may ask ourselves might be just how much screen time do we as parents / carers set aside each day / week? And how does this compare to 12 months ago? It may well be that we have all seen an increase! Is this a good thing? The assembly is scheduled for next Wednesday and internet safety will be a focus across the week.

Looking further ahead, the first week after half term will see the school working in partnership with Bigfoot Arts Company to see a wide range of fun activities for the children. These will be factored into our usual creativity week that starts each half term and will be something to look forward to. Further details nearer the date.

We had a successful Y6 meeting with Explore4all to discuss our Y6 residential to Berwick/ Edinburgh and we are very much hoping that everyone will attend, as has been the case on the previous two occasions we have run this trip.

There will be a meeting of Y5 parents on Tuesday February 12th at 3.45 to discuss the Thurston residential and again, we are hoping that we can persuade all of the children to enjoy the Thurston Experience - I know that many parents / carers will look back fondly on their time at Thurston or a similar outdoor trip in the past.

I look forward to seeing you all as the term progresses.

Best wishes.

Yours Sincerely,

K J Smithson

Head Teacher.