



The Abbey CE VA Primary School

Headteacher: Miss E. Fenn
Telephone: 01727 851802
Website: www.abbey.herts.sch.uk
Email: admin@abbey.herts.sch.uk

Grove Road
St Albans
Herts
AL1 1DQ

20th October 2015

Dear Parents

Parents' Evening

Parents' Evening will take place tonight and Thursday 22nd October. This is an opportunity for parents to have a ten minute appointment with their child's class teacher in the School Hall. These meetings are for parents only and **there will be no supervision for school age or pre-school children on site.**

As Mrs Cole (Year 5 teacher) is still unwell and signed off from work her Tuesday appointments have been moved to the first Tuesday after half term. At this moment in time we are hoping that Mrs Cole will be well enough to meet parents on Thursday evening, but **in the event she is not the appointments will move to Thursday 5th November.** Sorry for any inconvenience caused.

Harvest Service

Our Harvest Service is on Thursday 22nd October at 9.15am. **The Service is now going to be held in the Nave of St Albans Abbey** due to unforeseen works being carried out in the Crossing.

We will be delivering our Harvest offerings to St Albans and District Foodbank (based in Harpenden) where charities such as 'Open Door' shop for their supplies. There will be a retiring collection at the end of the service for adults only for those parents who wish to donate to this year's Bishop's Harvest Appeal.

Children are asked to bring to the Abbey Harvest Festival offerings that are particularly useful to the shelter, which are as follows:-

- Rice, breakfast cereals
- Milk (UHT or powdered)
- Tinned meals e.g. curries, stews, meat, puddings, vegetables, fruit
- Tea, coffee, sugar, fruit squash, cartons fruit juice
- Jams, honey, marmalade etc.
- Biscuits, snack bars
- Toiletries – toilet rolls, toothpaste, shampoo, shaving foam, towels, flannels.

The centre has indicated that they do not need donations of pasta or tinned tuna or soup.





The Abbey CE VA Primary School

I would be grateful if any parents with a car are able to deliver the boxes of items we have collected to St Albans and District Foodbank, The Russell Building, Rothamsted Research, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 2JQ from 12pm that day. Please let the School Office know if you are able to do so.

Last Day of Term

School finishes at 3.20pm on Friday for half term and all children are expected to be at school until this time on the last day of term. The next half term resumes on Tuesday 3rd November at 8.55am.

Governing Body and Parent Forum

Towards the end of the summer term the Governing Body asked parents to complete an online survey to gather parental views on various aspects of school life. A summary of the results has been on display at the front of school since our Open Evening in July. A more detailed analysis of the results will be available on our school website after half term in the school performance section.

The Governing Body would like to invite parents to a Governing Body and Parent Forum on Wednesday 25th November from 7-8pm in the School Hall. At this event several Governors will join me as we share the results of the survey with parents and discuss actions implemented or planned following the survey. We will also share the School Development Plan objectives for the year ahead and I will give parents an overview of the changes to assessment for this academic year affecting your children. We hope that the evening will prove informative to parents and that many of you can join us. This will be the first of two Governing Body and Parent Forums this academic year.

After School Childcare Provision Update

The parental survey results showed the Governing Body that parents would like us to investigate the potential provision of after school childcare on site at Abbey School. This is something that we have been looking into since July and it is proving a very complicated process.

Unlike the Lindees Breakfast Club, which runs successfully in the Practical Room each morning for one hour, the guidelines for childcare for more than one hour are very strict and prescriptive. Lindees can offer after school childcare offsite but parents have indicated to us that this is not ideal due to the site location being in Townsend Drive.

Mrs Upton and I investigated the after school childcare provision other local schools used and a company called XYZ were approached. Initial parent interest in this club was high and XYZ felt they had sufficient interest to facilitate an afterschool club from 3.20-6pm Monday-Thursday and 3.20-5pm on Friday. We have met with XYZ on several occasions and there are several stages in this process if we are to proceed.

Unlike a Breakfast Club, after school care for Reception aged children upwards may result in children being looked after for up to two and a half hours per night. Therefore, an after school club must be Ofsted registered. We have looked into this and we have been told that it may take up to 25 weeks for Ofsted to visit us to check the Practical Room where we plan to hold the after school club. **Therefore the earliest date this provision could be made available is Easter 2016.**



The Abbey CE VA Primary School

The initial plan is to use the Practical Room as a base and for the children to be able to use the IT Suite and Key Stage 1 playground under supervision from XYZ staff. The guidelines for afterschool childcare stipulate rules with regards to space allocation per child and if the Practical Room is to be used the maximum number of children the after school club could hold would be ten children. This number would not meet the demand for the club.

The School Hall would be made available for the after school club from 4.30pm when our Key stage 1 and Key Stage 2 football, netball, Italian, cheer and dance clubs have finished but the hall space cannot be used in the calculation for the number of children unless it was free from 3.20pm. The afterschool club provision is important to the school and the School Hall is vital as a meeting place, changing area and space for activities to happen, especially if it is wet. The staff and I feel strongly that the extracurricular provision and the preparation that the teachers undertake in their classrooms should not be adversely effected as it would have a negative impact on standards for your children.

The club would only be viable if XYZ were able to staff the after school club and following the initial lines of enquiry XYZ have not yet been able to do this. If this is something you might be interested in please contact the School Office. This type of after school provision would not be the day to day responsibility of myself, the headteacher of Abbey Primary School, and all enquires and concerns would need to be addressed to XYZ.

Going forward, I will write to all parents who indicated an interest in XYZ after school provision to reassess interest for Easter 2016 onwards. If this is something you would like to now consider, please let the School Office know and we will include you in our communications. From the interested parties I would like to create a working party to discuss a way forward and if the limitations of the Abbey School site prove too great to provide an effective after school provision to look at alternatives.

Premises Committee Update

The Governing Body Resources Committee is responsible for all aspects of the school building. Abbey School was built in 1970 and until recently we were still using the original 45 year old boiler. Last summer we installed a new boiler which was much more efficient and allowed us to have more control over the heating and hot water. The boiler project was funded by the Diocese of St Albans as was the perimeter fence several years ago. Our next project to ensure that Abbey School building is fit for purpose for another 45 years is to replace the heating pipework and heaters throughout the school. This project will run from October half term into July. Again, this project has been funded by the Diocese. The majority of our heating pipework is buried in floor ducts. We will not disturb this pipework and will instead run surface mounted pipework and install new, modern and improved heat emitters to meet the needs of a modern school.

There will be very little disturbance to the school and the school will continue to be heated through the winter months by the existing system. We anticipate that each class from Year 1-6 will be out of their class for no more than one week during the process and the class will be rehoused in the IT Suite where we have laptops and PCs for 30 children and we can use the School Hall. There will be two engineers on site at all times and these gentlemen will be DBS checked and will not be working near the children. There will be times when the children will not be able to access the hall and may have to walk around the outside of the building to access another part of the school. The Governing Body



The Abbey CE VA Primary School

have employed a company to project manage on our behalf, recommended by the Diocese, who will oversee the entire project and all Health and Safety requirements with the engineers. The school will not be in a position to take any bookings for hall rental until September 2016. This project is really exciting and will cost over £200,000. We have been planning for this project for a long time and the replacement pipework will allow the new heating system to run even more efficiently, whilst providing a warmer working climate for the children and staff.

Abbey School Volunteers

The staff of The Abbey Primary School are very pleased to welcome and engage with voluntary helpers who are keen to work alongside them in school. We believe it is of great value to the children and to the whole school community. It is important that the relevant roles are fully understood from the outset in order to avoid any blurring of roles and to ensure confidentiality for all children.

In support of this, the school ensures that volunteers are appropriately vetted and provided with training, guidance, support and supervision. As a school we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in our care; we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. If you wish to help in school with 1:1 reading, school trips, lunchtime clubs and the swimming rota, you may be asked to undergo a DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Service, previously the Criminal Records Bureau check) and you will definitely be asked to complete a childcare disqualification declaration form and read and sign our Volunteer Policy and Agreement which can be found on our school website.

If you would like to volunteer this year, I invite you to attend a Volunteer Meeting with Miss Felstead and myself in the School Hall. We will discuss the Volunteer Policy, code of conduct whilst in school, Child Protection and Miss Felstead will discuss strategies to use when hearing children read and supporting children with their learning.

The Volunteer Meetings will take place on:

- Wednesday 11th November at 9am
- Thursday 12th November at 10am (following Collective Worship with Father Richard which is being held in the School Hall for this week only)
- Thursday 12th November at 2.30pm

The meetings will last no longer than one hour and there is no need to book, please just turn up to which ever date/time suits you best.

I wish you all an enjoyable and restful half term.

Kind regards

Miss E Fenn
Headteacher