

4th September, 2009

Dear Parents,

Term has started very well indeed! The new children are settling in well and there is a happy and purposeful atmosphere around the school.

Please note that a term programme is enclosed with this letter. New parents will be interested to know that they can access the school diary by logging on to the school Virtual Learning Environment. This is done by clicking the VLE button in the bottom left of the website home page. We shall send you further information about the VLE shortly.

Breakfast Club

The response to our offer, last term to start a breakfast club was very low, with only two parents expressing interest. We will not therefore take this idea forward.

Reports

We are changing the reporting arrangements for children in Years 2 to 6. From now on, reports will be sent home three times a year instead of twice. At the end of the Autumn and Spring Terms, short reports will be written. They will include effort and achievement grades, test results (where appropriate), brief comments from teachers, a form teacher summary and pupil targets. At the end of the Summer Term, full reports will be written comprising effort and achievement grades and fuller comments from teachers. Targets, where appropriate, will be embedded among teachers' comments.

There will be no change to the Lower School reports. Nursery, Reception and Year 1 parents will receive target reports in the Autumn and Spring Terms, and full reports at the end of the Summer Term.

Pastoral Care -Tutorials

'Pastoral Care' is the benevolent support provided by school staff 'in loco parentis' which underpins children's social and emotional development, supports them through difficulties and keeps them on track to ensure that they are able to make the most of the opportunities provided, maximize their potential and experience success and a sense of well-being. Pastoral care is a theme that runs through the school at all levels and through all activities, and all staff – support as well as teaching – are aware of the important part which they play in supporting children's well-being.

To further enhance the opportunities for pastoral care, we are starting a programme of termly 'tutorials' for all children. Each child will have a short meeting with his or her form teacher, during which teacher and pupil may get to know each other better, and discuss targets, aspirations and any worries or problems which the child might have.

Forthcoming events

We shall be holding a series of **coffee mornings** this term for parents of children in all classes and hope that as many of you as possible will come along to meet and chat to your children's teachers and other class parents over a coffee and croissant. The first two, from 8:15 – 8:45 a.m. in the Lower School hall, are for N1 parents on Thursday September 10th and for N2 parents the following week, Thursday 17th September.

And from Mrs. Stark:

Relay For Life takes place next weekend, 12th and 13th September. Almost 40 members of the St Helen's community are now registered on the team. They will take part in an unbroken relay for 22 hours as well as participating in a number of fun activities over the period. The relay event is a Family Fun day with a large number of stalls, side shows and attractions. It is an excellent day out and we would be delighted to see as many of you there as possible. So many of you have given so generously towards the team effort that it would be fitting that you are present at the culmination of the effort.

Fundraising is going really well and there is still plenty of time to dedicate candles using the form sent out at the beginning of the week. I hope to let you know shortly whether we will meet our target of £25,000 raised over three years.

A new initiative I am launching this week is **Donation Station**. I would be very happy to receive anything which you would normally send to a Charity shop such as books, dvds, toys, bric a brac. I will fill (small) bags which Cancer Research will collect from me at school and for which we will have a sum credited to the team. Other teams have raised an average of £35 per bag through this! Please send in anything suitable from Monday.

For the Tog Day on Friday it would be nice if the children tried to incorporate the CRUK colours of turquoise and pink. It is not a problem, however, if they do not have anything in these colours. Please do not buy anything especially for this.

Yours faithfully,

D.A. Crehan

Mrs. G.R. Crehan