

Easter message to all staff, parents and friends:

“We don’t have enough staff or enough funding.”

If you have been watching the news this week, you will have heard this message repeatedly delivered by NHS leaders in response to the latest general public survey about the state of the NHS. Dedicated, hard-working NHS staff are being crushed under the pressure of excessive workload and a crumbling infrastructure. The workforce are demoralised, tired, concerned for patients, underpaid, undervalued and another round of strikes are imminent. The NHS are in a crisis.

I write this because if you replace the word ‘NHS’ with ‘School’, sadly the situation is identical and, despite what is blatantly obvious to everyone, the government continue to spout their political rhetoric and choose to look inwardly. They are blind to the crisis unfolding on their watch. Never before has it been more important for school communities to stand firm together, to show understanding, appreciation and gratitude to each other and to work together as one.

Holy Family is, and always has been, a very special community where God’s presence is evident wherever you turn. This unity and common purpose has allowed our small school to excel in so many different areas over the last 10 years and everyone should feel very proud of the part they have played in this continuous success. Knowing what we have achieved together should inspire and strengthen our resolve to continue to move the school forward as we face the most challenging of times ahead.

This is the context in which our school staff are currently operating. Despite the smokescreen comments from the education secretary this week, the school budget is in the most perilous position I have ever known. This is not due to poor financial planning, strategy or management but simply down to the fact that, on the back of years of underinvestment, government funding is woefully short of the increase in costs. Staff are working longer hours, under greater pressure, than ever before at a time when emotional well-being is supposed to be a government priority. It is a toxic and dangerous mix. It’s no wonder the profession is losing good people at an alarming rate; we now have more qualified teachers of working age in the UK not in education than actually in school employment. A statistic like that is simply unacceptable.

So, what can we do to change things or be helpful?

- As we approach the beginning of Holy Week and celebrating the feast of Easter, we need to remain focused on our core Catholic ethos which is at the heart of everything we do. The virtues of compassion, respect, patience, tolerance, inclusion, love and the service of others need to remain our driving force and be evident within every interaction. A kind word, a thank you, a smile or gracious acceptance of a situation can transform someone’s day for the better. If we don’t reply to a query as quickly as we used to, please bear with us. This will be because the individual simply cannot find the time to respond rather than doesn’t feel the need to respond. Societies myriad of problems quickly and frequently find their way into schools and it is school staff who are left to deal with them and find a resolution. Many of these issues are not the kind of things school staff initially trained in. They are hugely time-consuming and often emotionally draining for everyone involved.
- **Volunteering for school/PA events** is a fabulous way of helping out as well as boosting your own emotional wellbeing; giving time to others is good for the soul. Speak to the school office team or PA committee if you would like to help with anything during the summer term and beyond.
- **Sign up to Easy fundraising**, search for Holy Family Addlestone Parents Association then do all your online shopping via this route. It will cost you absolutely nothing but every time you make an online

purchase with a partner retailer, the school will receive a small percentage of your spending as a donation.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/>

- If you are in the fortunate position of feeling you could afford it, consider setting up a monthly contribution to the governors' fund. This money is used to help the school continue to develop and improve in areas such as curriculum, staffing, premises and resources. The recent purchase of new glockenspiels for music lessons came from the governors' fund. Speak to Mrs Newlands in the school office if you would like more details.
- **Join the 'Big Clear & Build'** Parent Force project as Mr Donnachie transforms the nature area into a usable space for the whole school community. We will require as many hands as possible to help cut down prickly things, clear & tidy the area and help prepare a solid flat area to house our new work shed. Mrs Cala has been working woodworking wonders this year with children from Reception Class upwards but sadly has not had a suitably sheltered and equipped area to teach. We have secured some funding and a new large work shed has been ordered. This will be erected in the nature area once the clear up has concluded and it will become a focus for inspirational, creative woodworking and crafts. We will share more information as the project gathers momentum but for now, please consider joining in the fun. We do not require any specific skills to generally help out but we will require some DIY acumen when it comes to putting the work shed together during the summer holidays.

Over the holidays, Mr Donnachie will be working on the following dates (clearing and manual work only):

Sun 2 April from 10am, Mon 3 - Thu 6 April from 8am onwards

Scythes, rakes, gardening gloves, strimmers, loppers, sensible footwear would be useful things to bring with you.

Mr Donnachie can be contacted on 07504814480 if you arrive and can't find him or wish to let him know when you are coming.

- **Summer term:** Hopefully the new term will begin in sunshine and remain that way for the many outdoor events and learning opportunities we will provide for the children. Please check the attached calendar of key dates. We look forward to making and sharing more special memories together.
- **Do you fancy joining a 10K fun run for charity?** If so, please consider joining the Bee-lieve Foundation team at the Woking Lions 10K Martian Run across Horsell Common on Sunday 25th June. At present, the charity have around 110 runners signed up to join the event which references the book 'War of the Worlds'. It will be truly wonderful to see 110+ yellow & blue t-shirts streaming across the common as our running bees recreate the Martian invasion! We would love to see lots of Holy Family parents, children and friends joining us. If 10K is not your thing, there is also a 5K and a half-marathon run taking place. All runners will receive an official Bee-lieve Foundation race shirt so please contact the charity on beelievefoundation@gmail.com if you do sign up. All the charity request is that you try to get some sponsors to back you as you stride majestically across Horsell Common.

All details for entry can be found using the following link:

<https://wokinglions.eventrac.co.uk/e/the-lions-martian-race-8847>

- **Wellbeing model exhibition:** last week we held an assembly for the children to introduce the wellbeing model & hobby exhibition which will be held in the hall on Wednesday 26th April from 1pm. We have asked all children, if interested, to bring in on the day something they have made/created at home simply because they love doing it. This could be Lego, a cake, a piece of art, woodwork, sewing etc. The Power Point we used is attached for more information. The aim of the exhibition is to draw attention to all the activities we can do outside of school to help our emotional wellbeing and hopefully inspire each other to take up a new hobby or interest. This is a powerful way of sharing & extending emotional wellbeing strategies. As an example, we currently have a lot of children enjoying making jigsaws during calm club which originates from one jigsaw being made. Teachers will remind children after the holidays. Hopefully, this will be as exciting, innovate and inspiring as the recent science fair. The exhibition will be open for viewing after school on Wednesday 26th and before school on Thursday 27th.

On behalf of all the staff, I would like to wish each of every one of you, and your families, a very happy, peaceful and blessed Eastertide.

We look forward to seeing you all on Monday 17th April.



Mr Tindall