



BYERS GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

TUESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

Please note the following:

COFFEE AFTERNOON – FRIDAY 15 FEBRUARY

We will be holding our coffee afternoon on the above date, commencing at 1.15pm. As usual we would be most grateful for the contribution of cakes, scones, biscuits etc. for the refreshment stall. The book club will run throughout the afternoon. If your cupboard is full of Christmas presents that may not be suitable for you, please recycle them - we are always looking for raffle prizes and any donations are most welcome.

WORLD BOOK DAY – THURSDAY 7 MARCH

This year we will be asking the children to dress up as their favourite book character. We thought we would let you know in advance so that you can start thinking of ideas. Further information will follow after half term.

SAFER INTERNET DAY

Safer Internet Day 2019 was celebrated in school on Tuesday 5 February with the slogan 'Together for a better internet'. The day provided a fantastic opportunity to engage with children about their digital lives. To help you talk to your children about having a positive and safe time online, the UK Safer Internet Centre has created a pack for parents and carers, including conversation starters, a factsheet, family pledge card and more. They have also produced a short film to accompany this pack. Please use the following link to access these resources:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2019/education-packs/activities-parents-and-carers>

BIG BATTERY HUNT

We launched the Big Battery Hunt on Thursday 24 January when the children were provided with recycling boxes. As soon as the boxes are full, please return them to school and we will add the batteries to our overall collection. Once we have half-filled our school container we can arrange for the batteries to be collected and our school will be entered into a competition to win prizes such as iPads and equipment vouchers. The closing date for this is Monday 3 June so we need to make sure we have enough batteries before then. If you require another recycling box please just ask as we have a number of spares. Thanks in advance for your help with this initiative which, as well as giving us the opportunity to win prizes for our school, is helping our children to learn about the importance of recycling in an everyday context.

SCHOOL FUNDING CRISIS AND PETITION

As a school, we feel that it is our duty to provide parents and carers with a fair and accurate picture of the real state of school funding in our area. All state schools in England are funded by a central government grant that is administered by the Department for Education. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), school funding per pupil has fallen 8% in real terms since 2010.

Schools are having to make difficult choices on how to spend their limited funding as their income has not kept pace with the rise in costs since 2010. All schools are working very hard to 'make ends meet' but this is becoming increasingly difficult and verging on almost impossible. Bank of England information shows that £100 of goods in 2010 cost £121.90 in 2017 (which is approximately a 20% increase), and schools funding has not kept up with the increase in costs.

On average, school funding in the North East of England will be cut by the following amounts by the year 2019/20 compared to 2015/16:

- £30,904 less per primary school
- £189,776 less per secondary school

(Source: www.schoolcuts.org.uk)

The government's latest statistical information on school funding by parliamentary constituency can be found using the following website address:

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/social-policy/education/schools/constituency-data-schools-funding/>

Furthermore, there is a crisis in funding for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Cuts to local authority budgets have affected the services they can provide to schools to support children with SEND. Local authority spending on schools has fallen by 55% since 2010, according to the IFS. Schools now have to fund the first £6,000 of a child's education, health and care support plan (EHCP) from the wider school budget, rather than receiving specific extra SEND funding.

Maintained nursery schools face a cliff-edge as their funding will be significantly cut by 2020 unless the government acts. Maintained nursery schools are the highest performing part of the education system with 98% being rated as good or outstanding. Despite this excellent record government spending decisions will mean that 64% of maintained nursery schools predict a budget deficit by 2020 unless the government takes measures to fund them properly.

And the picture in our special schools is no better. With increased pressures on school budgets and cuts to services that support our most vulnerable young people and their families, it is make or break time for our schools.

As funding has become tighter, schools have had to cut back on:

- Teaching and non-teaching staff
- Support for more vulnerable pupils
- Small group work for children who are not thriving in school
- Teaching resources (parents and carers being asked to pay for books and materials)
- Subject choices in secondary schools
- The range of activities for primary pupils
- Extra-curricular activities provided free or subsidised
- Repairs to buildings
- Renewal of equipment

From March 2018 there has been a very small increase in funding for schools. However, this increase has not closed the gap between the funding our school receives and the funding our school needs to provide the number of teachers and resources required to deliver the education all our children deserve.

If you think government should fund schools sufficiently and fairly, please show your support by adding your name to the petition 'Increase Funding for Schools', as well as encouraging family and friends to do so, via the link below:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/232220>

You will be asked to add some minimal information (name, email address, postcode) and then you will be required to confirm your email address by responding to the automated response sent to you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and please support your children's future by signing the petition.

HALF-TERM HOLIDAY

School will close for the half-term holiday on **Friday 15 February 2019 at 3.15pm**. We return on **Monday 25 February 2019**.

Mr W. Kirtley (Headteacher)