

# St. Bede's Weekly Newsletter



ST. BEDE'S R.C.V.A.  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

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**The Sixth Sunday of Easter** sees the Gospel telling us of the 'Greatest Commandment'. Love one another as God has loved us. This simple yet powerful guide should mould our lives. Year 5 shared this message with us this morning through the whole school Liturgy.

*How often do you remind yourself of how you show love to your peers?*

Yesterday two governors and I attended a day's training entitled **Safer Recruitment**. This was a refresher course but very worthwhile, it helped us to revisit the importance of child protection throughout staff recruitment and beyond. I am highlighting this to you so that I can communicate the importance of safeguarding our children from any harm. One major message is that we need an open environment where all members of the community feel that they can report any concerns. If you ever have a worry about the safety of a child in school please contact me or any member of staff – no worry is too small, please pass it on. If the worry concerns members of staff it is extremely important that it is reported, should you feel uncomfortable reporting it to a member of staff then please take to the governing body or you can use Northumberland's 'OneCall' service on 01670 536 400

This week, school have provided all children from Reception to Year 6 with **water bottles**. The aim of this is to ensure that every child has access to drinking water throughout the school day and that the water bottles used in school do not highlight a difference in children's home background. The children are expected to use the school water bottle. The bottles do not need filling before school as they can be filled with fresh drinking water throughout the day. I have spoken with the children about the bottles and they have given me their balanced views for them and against them. Some parents have also voiced their concerns about these water bottles and we are investigating the concerns – please do speak to school staff about any concerns you have. Some parents have voiced their appreciation at the provision of the bottles – thank you for these comments as it has allowed the staff involved in organising the bottles to feel appreciated.

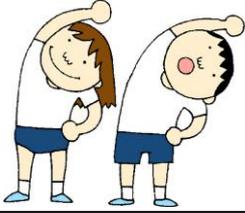
It is important to **speak to teachers** about your children and we know that sometimes there are important messages to pass on. If you need to speak to your child's class teacher before school please come to the main office before 8.45am and the office staff will help you. Alternatively either wait until the end of the day or arrange a time with the office. At 8.50am the teachers need to be with the class to get the day off to a positive start. Thank you for your understanding.

In two weeks on Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> May, we will be celebrating our Family Fun Day for International Day of Families. We would love you all to join us at 12:00pm, bring a picnic and join us on the field. Following that, the children will be grouped into their houses and follow a timetable of activities with you, their family! Could we please ask the children to bring their favourite board game on the day, in a named carrier bag? There will also be time for archery and a family quiz! It would also be great if the children could wear the corresponding colour of their house; a t-shirt, shorts, hat, socks or something else, but please do not buy anything new. If you are up for the challenge of taking on the staff at a game of rounder's after school, please leave your name at the school office. Looking forward to seeing you all there!

St Bede's is a community of faith, love and respect

- Inspiring us to achieve

Please make sure that your child has the correct **PE kit** for school so that PE times can run smoothly. If any parent finds it challenge to sort a PE kit please speak to us in school.



**The Statement to Live By** this week is *I can recognise comfortable and uncomfortable feelings*. It is so important that our children know that they have different types of feelings and that so as good ones and some are not so good. We have been encouraging children to talk about their uncomfortable feelings.



It has come to light that some parents are unsure of the principles behind **Poverty Proofing** the school day and therefore misconceptions are being discussed on the playground.

The stated principle of poverty proofing is that:

*'All activity and planned activity in schools should not identify, exclude, treat differently or make assumptions about those children whose household income or resources are lower than others'.*

The 'Poverty Proofing' of the school day is an attempt to make things equal for children when they are in school, the school day can impact children in many ways, positively and negatively. Children from less affluent households can be affected greatly when they can't have the luxuries that they see their peers enjoying.

Research shows that children may make up what happens in their home to not stand out, the stress that this must cause is really not necessary. School should be a place the children feel welcomed, valued, safe, and happy - the research shows that for some children it is the opposite and they miss school days because of this.

At St Bede's we are passionate about making school fun, but fun for all in an equal way. There are various ways we have started to do this in the hope that we create a fairer environment, including;

- Allowing parents to feel that they can approach us if financial help is needed to give their children the opportunities that other children have at school
- Actively discouraging branded equipment in school (water bottles, bags, clothes)
- Staff adapting the conversations that they generate within class – being sensitive when birthday presents & parties are discussed, when holidays are talked about
- Encouraging children in Years 5 & 6 to use envelopes to store their mobile phones so that it is not obvious what make and model it is
- Working with Friends of St Bede's to alter the disco costs
- Exploring a more cost effective school photographer and changing distribution of the purchased photos
- Not having an expensive book fayre in school
- Introducing a chill zone for lunchtimes with a skilled member of staff to listen to any anxieties

As part of our Poverty Proofing the School Day Audit these are some changes that we wish to explore in the future:

- How we can make educational trips more manageable for parents
- Exploring ways of providing healthy snacks to Key Stage 2 children
- Helping with PE kits for families who find it challenging
- Remove the expectation that children bring in sweets/birthday cakes for birthdays
- Dispel the myth that children have to give gifts to staff at Christmas/end of year
- Explore how breakfast club and after school clubs can be provided to children at a reasonable cost

We understand that some changes have not been received openly by all parents. The overarching aim though is to create a fairer school environment for all children. Our children are not young for long and although the real world does pose challenges for adults surely it is not fair for our children to be exposed to them if not necessary. They should all enjoy their learning time.

As parents and the main educators of your children I want to thank you for your support with this. Some children do not fully understand why these changes have happened within school it is tricky to explain fully without those children we wish to support, feeling upset. I trust that you will help your child appreciate that creating a fairer school day is the right thing to do.

If you wish to find out any more about our Poverty Proofing of the school day please speak to me or alternatively you can find information at <http://www.povertyproofing.co.uk/> Also if you have any suggestions on how we could continue to improve our school community please talk to me about it.