

The Friends of Windmill Hill Academy



Welcome Booklet

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This booklet has been created by the Friends of Windmill Hill Academy especially for parents of children joining our school community and for those who don't know much about what the Friends are or what they do. We realise it can be a little nerve-wracking starting at a new school and there always seems to be so many questions to ask. This booklet aims to provide you with information about our Friends who form a major part of our school life. If you have any questions that remain unanswered or you would like to get involved please contact one of the committee members via the school office or e-mail.

We are very fortunate to have Friends that are, although newly formed, an integral part of the school community. The Friends have already raised thousands of pounds which has been spent on improving equipment and resources to enhance our children's education and the facilities in school in general.

But our Friends are about much more than just fundraising. The Friends exist to provide closer links between home and school and it is an excellent way to bring staff, parents and children together socially in support of the school. It is fun too – as we are sure you will find out if you join us at one of the varied events throughout the school year.

How do we raise money?

Like most PTA's the majority of our funds are raised through the events that we run. Some of our most popular events are the Christmas Fair, Easter Egg Bingo, Sponsored Bounce, Wine and Wisdom and Summer Fair . Donations from parents – of time, money, items for sale, raffle prizes or services and skills –are what determine the success of our fundraising activities. Even small donations make a big difference to us. We're always on the lookout for other good fundraising ideas too, so be sure to let us know if you have any suggestions – just send us an email, friends@andaras.org post on Facebook Friends of Windmill Hill Academy or come along to a meeting.

The committee and our meetings

Our Friends of Windmill Hill Academy committee is made up of parents and staff. We currently have 4 elected staff and parents holding committee positions and several committee members. Members of the Friends give their time voluntarily for the benefit of every child in the school. All parents and members of the school community can get involved if they want to even if they only have a small amount of time available and all parents are automatically members of the association when their children join our school.

The Friends meet on a regular basis usually monthly, with smaller working groups meeting as necessary to organise the larger, more time-consuming events. Any parent is welcome at the meetings and we are particularly keen to meet new parents. Meeting dates are advertised via texts the school email/book bag/newsletter routes. They usually take place in the school at 3.30pm and the occasional evening meeting. Our Annual General Meeting is held in the autumn term and this is an opportunity to come along and hear in more depth about events we run, funds raised and how the money is to be spent or has been spent. We also elect our new committee at this meeting.

How do we get information to you?

All Friends letters are sent home either via your child's book bag, email, website, monthly newsletter, text, ClassDojo or on our Facebook page. We strongly advocate the use of email to communicate with parents and all Friends correspondence is added to the school website.

Community Links

We have developed strong links with the local community and are always well supported by both residents and businesses. Many of our local shops, leisure facilities, community groups and restaurants are very generous in their donations of raffle prizes and funds and provide invaluable support, particularly at our fairs. We are extremely grateful to these community members as they make a huge difference to our fundraising efforts. If you think your workplace could offer us time, services or raffle items please do let us know.

How do we spend the money we have raised?

Decisions on what items are to be purchased from the Friends funds are made during committee meetings. Requests can come from parents, staff or children. Normally all the items the Friends approve for purchase are the extras that are not covered by school budgets. We always endeavour to spend our funds in ways that will benefit all our children across all areas of the school and curriculum.

How can you get involved?

There are lots of ways you can help and support your child through the Friends. Offering to help before events is so valuable, it doesn't matter if you can't help on a regular basis. There are always little jobs that can be done from home if you have half an hour to spare e.g. wrapping gifts, preparing raffle tickets etc. We really couldn't achieve what we do without the unseen army of help that exists in school. You can of course, if you feel able, volunteer to be a Committee Member, or you can simply come along to the meetings and give us your ideas for fundraising events – this is also the time to ask questions or voice your opinion. You can help by letting us know if you have any contacts or skills we could use – everything is potentially valuable to us.

Chairs (joint): Mrs Lin Millard and Mrs Demelza Leather **Secretary:** Mrs Laura Callwood **Treasurer:** Mrs Judy Williams

Committee members: Mrs Sherrille Paterson, Miss Lisa Morris, Mrs Sammie D'Entrecasteaux, Mrs Angie Mason, Mrs Kat Turnock, Mrs Dom Metcalfe, Mrs Heidi Todd and Miss Nicky Osborne.

Thank you for taking the time to read our brochure. We hope you now know a little more about your Friends of Windmill Hill Academy. On behalf of all the children we would like to thank you for your invaluable support which enriches the learning experiences and makes their time in school so enjoyable. Every year we need new parents to join the Friends so if you'd like to get involved in any way please contact us either through the school or come along to a meeting.

Best Wishes and we look forward to meeting you at our events,