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Dear Parents,

Monday 1st February 2016

Federation Newsletter: January Edition

Welcome to the January edition of the monthly federation newsletter and I am amazed that we have already reached the end of another month! As always, we have been very, very busy and it always gives me great pleasure to update you on the many different new and exciting initiatives that we are currently working on, but more on this later. I have to say I have been very impressed with the way the children have come back into school and I sense they are thoroughly looking forward to another exciting term ahead.

Staffing

As you will all be aware, Mrs. Caswell retired in December after 18 years of amazing service to our federation of schools. You will all be pleased to hear that she is thoroughly enjoying herself and regularly provides us with updates about what she has been getting up to! With the departure of any member of staff, we are always challenged find a worthy replacement but I am pleased to report that we have managed to do just this after a highly competitive recruitment exercise and gruelling interviews. So, from April 12th, Mrs. Karen Johnson will be joining us as Bursar and she will be working across both schools, taking shared responsibility with myself for all financial matters. Karen is currently the Office Manager at a very large Junior School in Blackburn, Lancashire. Both she and her family are relocating to the area and it will be additionally exciting because she will also enrolling her daughter within our federation of schools. I am hoping that she will be in school for some orientation after February half-term and I hope that parents at both schools will have an opportunity to meet her.

As a growing federation, the governors and myself are always looking at the ways in which we can improve outcomes for different groups of children. Last term, our primary focus was with the Gifted and Talented pupils. This term, I am closely reviewing the work we are doing with our children who have an entitlement to the Pupil Premium Grant. To this end, I have determined that creating an additional team of staff, who can work across both of our schools, will be highly beneficial. The team will consist of the following key staff:

- Primary Learning Mentor (30 hours per week)
- PPG Teacher (2 days per week)

The Primary Learning Mentor and PPG Teacher will work very closely together to ensure that any barriers to learning for PPG pupils are removed. Barriers come in lots of different forms but their removal will help to ensure even better outcomes for eligible pupils. Very pleasingly, we have successfully recruited to both of these positions, as follows:

- Primary Learning Mentor: Miss Chelsea Howard
- PPG Teacher: Mrs. Faye Rowe

Most of you will already know Miss Howard, who has previously provided 1:1 support for a pupil at the Lutton St. Nicholas site. I am sure you will all wish to join with me in wishing her warm congratulations on her promotion. Mrs. Rowe joins us from the Freiston Centre for Environmental Education and I am tremendously excited to have recruited from an educational centre that I have the highest possible regard for. Miss Howard has already started in her role and Mrs. Rowe will be providing approximately one day per week until she officially takes up her role in April.

For the parents of pupils who receive PPG, Miss Howard and Mrs. Rowe will be offering a number of parent outreach sessions as building a very close, open and supportive relationship with yourselves will be central to the success of their roles and the subsequent improvement in outcomes for children. Please look out for further communication in the next couple of weeks.

Websites

You will be pleased to hear that the basic versions of our new websites are now available online and Sunburst Web Management have done an excellent job in getting us started. Now that all of the basic information has been posted online, we are ready to start customising the platform so that it reflects some of the feedback that you all provided during the November parents' consultation exercise. The first stage of this is to create different and secure areas within each website for children, parents, governors and staff. Each section will be populated with relevant information that can be easily downloaded. For pupils, this will include access to learning resources, homework folders and a facility to post work online, which the teachers will then be able to access. For parents, and very much in-line with your wishes, we will be posting information about your child's progress, attendance and indicators for effort on a half-termly basis. Additionally, you will also be able to download any information that the schools publish as well as access to our online diary facility. Finally, there will also be a feedback section open to you at all times and I will be personally monitoring this, providing a response that will hopefully improve our levels of communication still further. Before half-term, we will be issuing you with a username and an individual password that will allow you access to your only personal space. Exciting times indeed....

No Smoking Policy

The eagle-eyed amongst you will probably have noticed that all federation policies are posted online. These have all been updated so that they are fully in-line with local and national guidance. One of the changes I will be making to the No Smoking Policy is the inclusion of e-cigarettes, as they need to be treated in the same way as conventional cigarettes. National guidance confirms that the smoking of conventional cigarettes is not allowed on any school premises, including all of the outdoor areas. In terms of policy, e-cigarettes are viewed in exactly the same way as conventional cigarettes therefore they cannot be used anywhere within the school grounds as well. The way you all uphold this policy is excellent and I am always grateful for the support you provide to our schools.

And Finally....

As difficult as it is to believe, the first half of the spring term comes to an end on **Friday 12th February** at the normal times of **3.15** and **3.30** respectively. We return to school on **Monday 22nd February**. On behalf of the children, staff and governors, I would like to wish you all a very happy and enjoyable half-term break.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. L. Whitney – Head Teacher

Gedney Church End and Lutton St. Nicholas Federated Primary School