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Dear Parents,

Thursday 30th March 2017

Federation Newsletter - March Edition

Welcome to the final federation newsletter of the spring term and what a busy time we have been having in school, of late. It is also good to be able to report that the weather appears to be on the turn with today being the hottest day of the year so far. Let us just hope that this is a portent for the Easter holidays and that we get wall-to-wall sunshine throughout! I know that this has very much helped the children with their special activities for Easter at both schools but more on this later.

Staffing 1

It is not often that I am in the happy position of being able to bring you exciting news. In fact, during my 7 years with the federation, I have only been able to do this 3 times but it brings me great pleasure to inform you all that Mrs. Carrott, class teacher (part time), Class 1 at Lutton, is expecting her second child! I know you will all recall celebrating when Delilah was born; now we have another exciting event to look forward to! Pleasingly, Mrs. Carrott will remain with us until the end of June, which will just about see her class through to the end of the current academic year. I hope you will all join with me in welcoming this very special news!

Staffing 2

I wanted to give you a quick update regarding the recruitment of a new Executive Head Teacher to the federation, as there have been a number of developments since the publication of my last newsletter. Our advert was published on Monday of last week and I am pleased to report that this has generated some interest, as well as visits to the schools by people who may be interested in applying for the post. The closing date is Thursday 13th April and we are hoping to hold interviews during the week beginning Monday 24th April. We will provide a further update when the April newsletter is published to parents. I would like to thank governors for their dedication and the great efforts they have gone to, to ensure that we are able to recruit to this very important position.

PE and Swimming Provision

Within our federation of schools, we are very proud to offer regular PE sessions for all children and weekly swimming for the pupils in years 3 and 4. We know how important these areas of the curriculum are and like to see all of our children taking part regularly. Of late, we have begun to notice that on occasion, children are coming into school either without the right PE kit, or with earrings that they cannot remove. Additionally, a number have informed us that they cannot take part due to illness. All of these issues conspire to reduce participation levels and this is a concern to me. Going forward, I would like to request that if your child is not well enough to take part in a PE lesson or swimming, that you write to us to confirm that this is the case. It would be helpful if you could outline the reasons for their non-participation and we will then retain a copy of this letter on file. Also, if your child wears earrings and they are unable to remove them, that you ensure they do not come into school wearing the same. As a staff, we are not permitted to provide any assistance in this respect. Finally, if your child has hair that hangs below the shoulder, please could you ensure that it is tied back on a PE day. While I can understand that these procedures may appear a little cumbersome, they exist to ensure your child can take part in the PE curriculum regularly and safely. Thank you.

Easter Fun!

Easter is always an interesting time of year and I often feel that it is the first chance the children really get to have a proper rest! Christmas is always such a busy time but the Easter vacation will hopefully provide the children with an opportunity to spend some down-time resting and recuperating. As a staff, we also feel that the significance of Easter is not always fully understood, therefore we have been providing all of the children with additional provision that relates to the story and how it is celebrated throughout the world. Part of this has involved Easter activities led by volunteers at St. Mary Magdalene's Church in Gedney and also the Friends of Lutton School. I am very happy to report that the weather really held up for us and the children all had a brilliant time. As always, my gratitude goes to all of the people who so regularly help out at such events, and also to Martin McNamara, who introduced Key Stage 2 at Lutton to a very different experience involving compass points, much thinking and great fun for all concerned. How lucky are we to have such good friends at both of our schools!

Sainsbury's Vouchers

Can I thank those parents who have managed to donate their Sainsbury's vouchers to both of our schools. We are still collecting so please feel free to drop off any that you have. You might also have friends, neighbours or other family members who may be prepared to donate their vouchers as well. If this is the case, please could you thank them on my behalf.

Hilltop

As many of you will know, March is the month when the children in Year 4 visit Hilltop, in Sheringham, Norfolk. This year, I am delighted to report that every child went, which meant we had a 100% take-up rate for both residential. This made me especially happy as they will be the last that I do! Anyhow, the children in Year 4 had a fantastic time and it was a real pleasure to see them take such confident strides in their learning. I was also very impressed with the programme of activities that we put together and felt that the progression from one experience to the next was just about right for our children. Central to this was the fact that they worked their way up to the most challenging activity of the whole experience, which was the Air Jump. I was so proud that many of our children made it to the highest platform and confidently jumped onto the inflatable below. Early in the new term, we will be hosting an assembly for parents where all of their children's successes will be roundly celebrated!

Swimming Provision

Just a very quick reminder that swimming provision for the pupils in years 3 and 4 will recommence on our return to school after the holidays. The first session will take place on **Wednesday 19th April** and also on the consecutive two Wednesdays. There will be no swimming during the week beginning **Monday 8th May** because this is SAT's week for the pupils in Year 6. It's all-change again on **Wednesday 17th May** because this will mark the beginning of the intensive catch-up swimming programme for all pupils in Year 6. These sessions will run for 6 consecutive weeks and will ensure that all of our children meet the national requirements in swimming at the end of Key Stage 2. For those pupils who have already reached this milestone, Life Saving skills and qualifications will be taught by the trained coaches at Wisbech Pool. Exciting times indeed....

And Finally....

Please remember that our schools will close tomorrow for the Easter holidays. We will re-open again on **Tuesday 18th April** at the normal times. On behalf of the children, governors and staff, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very enjoyable break and I hope that the Easter Bunny brings lots of lovely treats on Easter Sunday.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. L. Whitney - Head Teacher

Gedney Church End and Lutton St. Nicholas Federated Primary Schools