



Thursday 2nd May 2019
Dear Families,

TOMORROW

Cake Sale hosted by Year 3

Stay and Play! Please stay after the bell and join in a classic EP game!

Events in school next week 6th - 10th May:

Monday 6th

SCHOOL IS CLOSED AS IT IS A BANK HOLIDAY.

Tuesday 7th

8am Early morning football for Years 3 to 6. Please arrive on time!

8am Running Club with Coach Martin.

Year 5 visit the amazing Centre of the Cell at Queen Mary's University.

3:45pm Years 3 and 4 Football tournament on the Heath behind the Lido. Supporters please!

Wednesday 8th

Year 4 are visiting Golders Hill Park.

3:30pm Tasty Tuckshop.

Thursday 9th

8am Year 5 and 6 Athletics Squad training.

Friday 10th

8am Girls only Multi-sports Club.

9am Meeting in the Lab to help plan the Summer Fair.

Cake Sale hosted by Year 4.

Attached letter re budget crisis

Please read the attached letter.

I have been headteacher here for almost 18 years and have had the most wonderful time, along with the staff and governors, in creating our fantastic school. We have terrific support from our team in managing a tight budget, but in line with all schools nationally, we now face a budget crisis.

I think we present as a school that is doing alright! Staff are positive and enthusiastic, the site is spotless and well kept, and the school is full of wonderful displays and exciting happenings. I would understand that you have had no 'clues' about the financial realities we face. We want to host a meeting on **Wednesday 15th May** to explain our situation and to rally support in many ways.

I hope that, unlike some other meetings we have held over the years where staff have outnumbered parents, we will be overwhelmed with the turnout at this meeting, as a show of support for all that we do and believe in. It would mean a lot to the staff and me. Thank you.

Summer Fair - Saturday 6 July. A message from the PTA

"Planning meeting - The PTA are gearing up for the Summer Fair, a great event and our biggest fundraiser of the year. Please do join us on **Friday 10 May at 9-10am** in the Lab, or speak to your class reps if you want to know more or have any ideas you'd like raised.

Entertainment - Last year we had amazing entertainment provided by parents. Anyone who is up for performing this year (singing, playing or otherwise), please let us know.

Silent Auction - As usual, we'll be running the fantastic silent auction which makes a big contribution to the funds raised. The success of this relies on your donations: please contact Sam (Nursery) if you can donate/source any prizes or have skills you can offer in return for bids. Theatre tickets, days out, meals out, tuition, decorating, kids parties, nutrition advice, personal training, gardening, holiday homes would all make great lots.

And finally, please put the date - **Saturday 6 July** - in your diaries. It's a great school and community event, and that's thanks to everyone who comes along to support it on the day!"

Please get in touch with Hannah and Lucy if you want to know more or can help:
hannahkogilvie@gmail.com / lucyjw78@gmail.com

Congratulations

To our Swimming Squad! We came 5th out of 16 schools, pretty impressive as a small school! Special congratulations to our medallists: Cosmo in Y3 secured a gold in boys' freestyle, silver for Luz in Year 4 for boys' breaststroke and for the girls' relay team of Lyla in Year 6 and Madeline, Jessica D and Jessica J in Year 5.

Well done too, to the 50 children who gave the excruciatingly hard UKMT National Maths Challenge a go! Results back in the next couple of weeks.

Summer Concert auditions

On **Thursday 16th May**, Laura and I will audition all children who would like to perform in our legendary Summer Concert! This is a really open forum for anyone - group or individual - to perform on stage, celebrating music. Singing or playing instruments, any type of music and parents are invited too! It isn't just for those enjoying private instrumental lessons, in fact, some of the top acts over the years have been the most untutored!

Those of you who have been to all our concerts over the years know that, whilst it is a long evening, every single act is precious and enjoyed and the crowd are legendary in their warmth and support! Make a note in your diaries: **Thursday 20th June** at 6.30pm.

Shed Talks

Also attached are the dates for this term's Shed Talks. These are open to all parents and there is no need to book. They are very popular and we always get great feedback.

Assemblies- atoms

This term we are looking at 'big ideas' in science, following on from our big ideas in history and geography in previous terms. We began this term's assemblies with the mind-blowing concept that **everything in the universe is made of atoms**. Ask your child how big a grapefruit would be if each atom was the size of a blueberry, what atom means and where atoms first came from...

With best wishes
Kate Frood and staff



Thursday 3rd May 2019

Dear parents,

We are writing to update you on our financial position as a school and to ask for your help.

The challenging financial climate

Our governors, ably supported by our fantastic admin team, have worked so hard with increasingly tight budgets in recent years to reduce costs, seek additional revenue and make financial efficiencies. However, various factors have conspired to mean that we now face a budget deficit which is likely to increase significantly over the coming years.

- Reduced central government funding for us as for all schools;
- Increases in staffing costs: pay increases, increased pension costs and significant back payments for support staff pensions;
- A reduction in our funding for deprivation, reflecting the changing demographic of our school in recent years;
- A reduction in funding for pupils with special needs.

Obviously we agree with pay increases for hard-working staff and with the principle of more money going to those schools who face greater challenges. But, as you know, there is a national issue with regard to the overall level of schools funding in particular and for public services more generally.

Our position

The net result is an in-year shortfall of about £30,000 next year and a certainty of increased deficits going forward unless we take swift action. PTA fund-raising cannot and should not fund core staffing (classteachers, admin staff etc). This is the job of central government and it is the responsibility of the governing body to set a budget on a sustainable basis.

Whilst we will have to take steps as a school to reduce our core costs, it is time to consider how we can '**Keep It EP**' for many years to come so that your children can continue to enjoy the rich and broad curriculum that this school offers. Music tuition, sports opportunities, scientists in residence, our extraordinary trip programme that embeds our curriculum in real experiences, dance groups, art projects, evening community events and residential are, after all, what make our school so unique, engaging, inspiring and inclusive. This rich curriculum offer is not statutory and is not on offer in many primary schools.

We are lucky to have such committed staff, many of whom have been with us for many years and as well as leading and supporting all these extra opportunities, are themselves inspired by the richness of the Eleanor Palmer curriculum and community. '**Keep it EP**' also enables us to recruit and retain the very best teachers.

The work of our Teaching School is also part of our income and our ability to recruit and retain teachers. Key staff work exceptionally hard to generate an income that already tops up our budget but again, this is not guaranteed into the future.

How can you help?

We need your help to consider how we are to generate more - and a sustained - income to support our rich curriculum offer whilst protecting our core values and principles. We want to set up a fund called 'Keep It EP', working in partnership with the PTA, which will exist to sustain our 'extras' so that our shrinking budget can focus on covering core funding.

We have some ideas but would welcome a broader discussion with parents. We have a plan to enable regular donations but we also want to explore corporate schemes, alumni networks, fund-raising ideas and wider campaigns. We need action, we need volunteers, we need practical help.

Most importantly, as we move forward into difficult times, we want to maintain our inclusive community culture. We are - and will be - so grateful to parents who are able to contribute financially, enriching the lives of all our children, but we value equally those families who are not able to contribute, or who support us in a different practical way..

All parents are invited to a meeting on **Wednesday 15th May at 7pm**. It will be informal but there will be a chance to hear more about our financial situation and to share ideas about how we can work together to retain all that we value.

With best wishes



Kate Froud
Headteacher



Jen Allan
Chair of governors



Wednesday 15th May at 7pm