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The year continues apace and I suspect you may have begun to think the Newsletter had been superseded by “Notes for Information”!!! Unfortunately, we sometimes get overtaken by events and best laid plans are superseded by the need to get information to you. We will try to do better! This Newsletter will act as both a catch up and an opportunity to focus on future issues. I must thank you all for the support given to the Christmas Fayre at the end of last term which proved to be our best ever. The public presentation of a very large cheque for £20,000 from the Friends Association to the school is of enormous credit to the efforts of the Friends Association Committee. Their tireless work is much appreciated for the fundraising of course, but also for the contribution they make to the wider life of the school. I think overall they find their efforts rewarding but they are dependent upon your support and attendance at events. Sadly this was not forthcoming at the recent Race Night, which was only attended by approximately 50 people and but for the personal support of the Committee would not have taken place. Those at the event clearly enjoyed the evening but the event would have been so much better with another 30-50 in attendance as in the past. The demands placed on people are appreciated but the Committee do try and vary events and I would ask you to lend your support as often as possible. Their efforts enable us to: run our coach and mini bus as ongoing ventures and, more recently, has seen us able to develop the environmental area, install the games area with tables and wall games, begin to establish a gardening club with a designated area and by the summer term there will be new playground markings on the playground. I hope this offers reassurance as to how well their/your money is being allocated and I would ask you to place the following events in your diary and give whatever support you can:-

EVENT

Pop in for afternoon tea 2.30-3.30 pm (including CETS speaker)
60s, 70s, 80s evening with guest performer ‘Elvis’
A professional play performance of The Wizard of Oz for children
Summer Family Disco

DATE

Wednesday 12th April
Friday 5th May at 7.30 pm
Sunday 2nd July
Saturday 8th July

Having mentioned Christmas we now find Easter almost upon us. Your children have clearly taken on the message of Lent as seen in their support for the Catholic Children’s Society collection and their work in school. PLEASE NOTE:-

STATIONS OF THE CROSS – ST BARTHOLOMEW’S CHURCH, ELLISON ROAD, NORBURY – FRIDAY 7 APRIL AT 7.00 pm. All Junior children are requested to attend in full school uniform with younger children welcome as long as they remain with their parents for the service, which will conclude at approximately 7.30 pm. Families and friends are likewise invited to the service, which will provide a good

lead in to Holy Week the following week. We appreciate that the Year 4 and 5 children on the Easter residential visit are due back at approximately 5.30 pm on this day but would ask you to endeavour to get them to this school service if at all possible.

EASTER BREAK

Please note school closes at 2 pm on Thursday 13th April and we would ask you to ensure your child is collected promptly. School re-opens for the summer term on Wednesday 26th April.

I am aware that there has been some surprise at how our school's Easter break dates are so different to those of other schools. I would confirm that our area Bishop requested that Catholic schools work on into Holy Week as this is such an important time in the church calendar and schools are well placed to support this if the children are in school. My Croydon Catholic Primary Headteacher colleagues agreed to adjust holiday dates accordingly hence the differing dates. Hopefully this will not cause too much inconvenience to anyone. It is a rare occurrence for such a large variation in dates which we will bear in mind on any future occasions.

SPECIAL EVENT – SATURDAY 16th SEPTEMBER

Black Tie Michaelmas Dinner Dance (on site in specially erected Marquee)

Four-course meal and dancing to live band. This prestigious event will include an after dinner auction. The function is limited to 150 people. There will be 15 tables of ten. All are welcome to buy tickets and be allocated to a table but why not consider getting a party together and buy a table. Tickets will be offered for sale in the week prior to the summer half term – watch for the flyer and separate details for all the Friends Association events.

We can be proud as another member of our teaching staff gains promotion to a senior post. Many of you will have heard that Mrs Day has been appointed to the Deputy Headship of St Chad's School and takes up her new post after Easter. Whilst we are very sorry to lose her we wish her every success in her new post and remain pleased that she is continuing to work in the Croydon area in one of our Croydon Catholic schools and as a result will stay in contact with St James the Great.

We look forward to welcoming Miss Susan Gallagher to the staff who will initially assume responsibility for Class 3.2 for the summer term.

Parents will be kept advised in regard to all staffing issues which are currently under review in preparation for the new academic year.

The Governors are very aware of how our school's success makes our staff highly recruitable and that we are keen to support and see them progress particularly within the Catholic sector. They are nonetheless keen to keep a balance of experience on the staff and will endeavour to maintain an element of staff retention as possible and appropriate.

PREMISES ISSUES

I am able to confirm that following a period of extended sick leave our Premises Manager, Mr Tamkin Riaz, has ceased his employment at St James the Great to allow him to develop his own business interests.

I would record my personal thanks to Mrs Polina Athayde who has continued to cover, manage and support cleaning arrangements and our cleaning team during this difficult period. This is particularly appreciated as she had decided to give up her cleaning responsibilities at Christmas. We are indebted to her. Arrangements are now in hand to appoint a new Premises Manager as soon as possible.

ZO ZBARAWSKA

A number of staff have visited Miss Zbarawska who is still in St George's Hospital. She continues to make slow but steady progress. She has expressed considerable appreciation of the support she has received and talks fondly of her time at St James the Great. Please keep her in your prayers.

CHARTERMARK DEVELOPMENTS

We were pleased to be re-accredited with our Chartermark, being the only Croydon school to hold this accreditation. As part of the external re-validation we were asked to provide a more formalised system by which to record comments, be they complimentary or otherwise. A form has been designed to facilitate this and two copies are attached. Further supplies will be available in the racks on the parents' board in the infant corridor outside of the main hall. Please feel free to use these either via your child or by using the box located in the Reception area.

SCHOOL MEALS

Our school kitchen staff have received a number of compliments from visitors in regard to the school meals service they provide. Current take-up suggests that the service is also appreciated by yourselves and the children. The salad bar has proved very successful and we would remind children bringing packed lunches that 40p tokens are available from the school office if they wish to access the salad bar.

Croydon schools have just faced an increase in meal charges to £1.55. I am pleased to be able to report that we will be able to hold our price at £1.40 until the end of this academic year but that due to increased costs the price will have to rise to £1.50 from September. This does, however, I feel still represent very good value for money.

ABEL AND COLE ORGANIC FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

This delivery service to the school has gone well and the small but consistent flow of orders has already earned the school over £200. We are happy to continue to support this scheme but I am sure you will appreciate the administrative time it takes. It has been decided, therefore, to request payment either half termly or termly in advance and this will be the length of commitment required. The first delivery next term will be on Thursday 4th May. The first half term is 4 weeks and the second half term is 7 weeks. No price change so costs per week will be Vegetable bag £5, Fruit bag £6.50 and Combi bag £7.50.

If you wish to continue with your deliveries, join the scheme, or give it a try please ensure payment for a half term or full term is sent in an envelope marked with your child's name, amount enclosed and type of bag(s) required by Friday 28th April. (Recipe sheet attached.) Why not give organic a try?

PACKED LUNCHES

Whilst children are able to bring packed lunches concern has arisen over the content of some of these lunches. There is to be a national drive on trying to improve the nutritional value of packed lunches about which further guidance is due to be given. I would remind parents providing their children with a packed lunch that they must not include chocolate bars, hot or cold drinks apart from bottled water. Water is also freely available at lunchtime. Care should be taken during the summer months bearing in mind the affect of hotter temperatures on food stored in lunch boxes. Cooling packs are now available from supermarkets etc. It has come to my attention that some children are having nuts included in their packed lunches. Whilst accepting these are healthy please remind your child to take great care to ensure these are not offered to other children and that they themselves wash their hands after lunch in order to protect children with nut allergies.

ST JAMES THE GREAT GYMNASTICS CLUB

WANTED Parent/Student/Anyone over the age of 15 who would like to become a judge for St James the Great Gymnastics Club. Training will be provided. Please contact Gill (Head Coach) on 07725 743371.

PARKING

Please keep the zig-zags free to the gates of the school and take special care in regard to cyclists of which we have an increasing number. I was also approached this week by a neighbour who is a doctor on call and he was extremely concerned that on a number of occasions his driveway had been blocked by parents parking their cars across his driveway in the morning and evening. In the event of an emergency he would be unable to get his own car out of his driveway. Please be considerate.

FOSTERING

We have been asked by an independent agency dealing with Fostering to provide information – see attached flyer about Fostering in case any parents may be interested

RESIDENTIAL VISIT YEARS 4 AND 5

This group travel to the Isle of Wight next week and we wish them a great break with fine weather.

ADMISSION TO ST JAMES THE GREAT

Our offers for Nursery and Reception places have now been made. We remain heavily over-subscribed so prospective applicants are reminded of the need to meet our admissions criteria if seeking a place.

SECONDARY TRANSFER

Congratulations to all our Year 6 pupils who are now placed at a secondary school for September with the vast majority gaining their first preference. The breakdown of school allocation is as follows:-

Bishop Thomas Grant:	19	St Philomena's:	12
Cator Park:	1	The John Fisher School:	8
Coloma Convent:	7	The London Oratory:	3
La Retraite:	1	Wilsons:	2
St Joseph's College:	6	Moving away:	1

CYCLE TRAINING YEAR 5 PUPILS

Croydon's Road Safety Department have offered us an opportunity to participate in a new level one course on cycling for Year 5 pupils. This will take place on two consecutive Tuesdays between 4 and 5.30 pm on the school site. This will take place on 2nd and 9th May and is limited to 12 pupils. Application will be on a first come, first served basis as forms are requested from the school office.

ATTACHMENTS

RE Newsletter, Vegetable/Fruit Recipes, Foster Carer information, comment forms. Your children will be bringing home a circular entitled "Your Local Schools" offering a telephone service provision from which the school receive a commission. This comes without any recommendation other than one parent who has already taken up this offer indicated they felt it had worked well and was good value.

ADVERTISEMENT ONE

Imagine being pampered, refreshed and revitalised within the comfort of your own home if preferred. A friend of Mrs Pillay's offers a range of beauty treatments by appointment between 9 am and 9 pm Mondays to Fridays at home or at your home.

1 hour @ £35 or 2 hours at £55 with 20% off your first treatment when mentioning St James the Great school or six treatments with the sixth treatment free.

For further information on the range of treatments available telephone Anneline on 07913 598633 or email on anneline_p@hotmail.com, or contact Mrs Pillay for a brochure.

ADVERTISEMENT TWO

Reflexology: We have a parent who has asked us to draw your attention to their company, Bellesima, of fully qualified Reflexologists. They are offering a complementary first treatment. If interested in an appointment email: Bellesima@hotmail.co.uk or telephone Susan on 07749 882537 or Nikki on 07835 973837 mentioning St James the Great.