



# St. Michael's Church of England Primary School

Carlisle Road, Dalston, Carlisle, Cumbria CA5 7LN • Tel: 01228 711544 • Headteacher: Mrs L Smith

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Our school values: Respect • Kindness • Challenge • Forgiveness • Perseverance

9 September 2022

Dear Parents,

## NEW BEGINNINGS

Welcome back to St Michael's to our pupils in Year 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and a very special welcome to our thirty new reception pupils. This year we were oversubscribed and unfortunately could not grant a place for all pupils who applied. We also welcome new pupils to our Year 3 and Year 4 classes.

In our office, we have Miss Jonsson as our new school business manager. She has been working with Mrs McDonald and Mrs Bell during the holidays and is quickly learning our online systems and school procedures. Thank you for your patience in advance as Miss Jonsson 'learns the ropes' and our apologies in advance, if things don't run quite so smoothly to start with.

## SCHOOL UNIFORM

Our children look very smart in their new school uniform. It is great to see them in the autumn/winter uniform with crisp white shirts and ties – smart and ready to learn. All pupils will need a PE kit in school every day that stays on their peg, ideally in a small draw string bag or boot bag. This helps to keep our cloakrooms tidy as space is limited. This year we will be offering parents the opportunity to purchase second hand uniform, at significantly reduced prices. We are sorting and organising our second-hand stock to ensure it is washed, clean and of a high standard. More details will follow in due course.

## PARKING

I know parking is difficult close to school. There are parking places in the village, please try to use these as much as possible. When parking close by to private residential properties, we ask that you respect drive ways and entrances and leave enough room for pedestrians, pushchairs and wheelchair access on the pavements. Your support with this is greatly appreciated and helps us to keep everyone safe in our local school community.

## SCHOOL CROSSING

Steve Carruthers helps to keep our children safe whilst crossing Carlisle Road. Please can you encourage your child to cross with him and avoid crossing before to enter the reception gate. Modelling this whilst dropping off and collecting is really key to keeping all of our pupils safe.

## HOMEWORK

We ask that you support your child with their reading at home as much as you can – ideally at least four times each week for approximately 20 minutes each time. It is much better to make this a relaxed and enjoyable experience, to develop a love of books, stories and information finding rather than a chore.

As a staff team, we reviewed our homework policy during our INSET. We have taken on board some requests from parents and feel it is timely to start to include a maths tasks on a weekly basis for our junior pupils. (This will be in addition to any online maths activities they take part.) Junior pupils (Y3-Y6) will continue to have weekly spellings and our Year 6 pupils will also have a weekly grammar task.



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## COMMUNICATION

Effective home/school communication helps our children to grow in confidence and really engage with their learning. It is really important to us as a team that we communicate on a regular basis and that we keep you informed of future events. Our website contains lots of useful information and is regularly updated. Regular newsletters, emails and texts will continue to be sent out to ensure information is shared. Class half termly curriculum newsletters will be sent out very soon with further details of what our pupils are learning. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to be in touch with either your child's class teacher, Miss Mawson or myself. We want to answer any of your queries and encourage you to have an active role in your child's education.

## 'WHATS APP/SOCIAL MEDIA'

I am aware that many class cohorts have 'Whats App' parent groups. These can be a very valuable way of sharing ideas, organising opportunities for the children and keeping in touch as parents. It has come to light that occasionally some parents are venting concerns or issues within this forum and other online apps, (Facebook) before they have discussed it with myself or my team in school. These conversations can then escalate and become very negative, when they could easily be resolved through direct communication with school. May I ask that all parents speak directly with myself, Miss Mawson or class teachers if you have any concerns. In doing so this will help us to have a happy, thriving and positive school community for everyone.

## SCHOOL MEALS

Towards the end of the summer term I met with the lead area manager of Orian, our school meals provider regarding the proposed price increase for our school meals. He agreed to go back to his line manager to consider any possible reduction to the increase. Unfortunately, our school meals have had to be increased. School has absorbed the price increase since July whilst these negotiations were happening. Regrettably from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September, school meals will now cost £2.80 per day. This is a reflection of the increased cost of living we are all experiencing. Please remember that some families may be eligible for free school meals and please get in touch with our school office if you would like further details of how to apply.

## PACKED LUNCHES

We have several pupils in school with serious allergies. Pupils must not bring anything in their packed lunch that contains nuts. Chocolate spread sandwiches contain hazelnuts and should not be given. Our pupils must not share anything in their packed lunch with others as some pupils may be dairy intolerant or have further dietary needs. We appreciate your support with this.

## OUR QUEEN

Finally we need to pay tribute to the passing of our monarch, HM Queen Elizabeth II. I have led a collective worship in school today to help our pupils to reflect and remember her 70 years of service and to help them to try to understand the outpouring of grief from millions of people around the world. I want to reassure you that in this period of mourning throughout our country, our pupils will have opportunities to talk, share, reflect on what this means to them. As a staff team we are committed to supporting our pupils' emotional and spiritual development. We intend to access books of condolence online so that our pupils can leave their thoughts, wishes, prayers in a safe forum. Our thoughts and prayers are with The Queen's family at this time.



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On a happier note to end this letter, St Michael's teaching team and myself look forward to a happy, engaging year ahead full of exciting learning opportunities for our children.

As always, please do get in touch if I can help you in any way.

Kind regards

*Lorna Smith*

Mrs Smith