

LETTER FROM PTFA – PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ!

Dear All,

I have asked the school to contact you to inform you about the new PTFA and to encourage you to get involved and contribute your ideas and thoughts.

First of all- this will probably be the longest email you will ever get from the PTFA- so please bear with us. It is not as bad as it looks honest!

A bit about me- I am mum to Callum in the Reception class and I have one daughter also who is not yet at school. We moved to Grantham in August 2009 from London so I am greatly looking forward to meeting more parents at the school and getting involved. In my London life, I was the Treasurer and active member of the PTA at my son's pre school (joined to the primary school) and it was there that I was able to get an inside view of how a successful PTA should be run and the positive rewards it can bring, not just for the children but for the parents, families and local community too. For this reason I have agreed to start as the initial main point of contact for the present until our first meeting where roles can be formally appointed. Before that it may be useful to outline what I think the PTFA should be and should mean to the school.

- It should be a welcoming group dedicated to creating opportunities for our children but also events where we can get involved as families. We should be hosting events throughout the year and re-investing the proceeds back into the school, be it in the form of visiting performers/educational experiences, days out, equipment etc. Just recently the excellent work of some dedicated parents has led to new books being bought for the library- think what we can achieve if we all come together.
- Secondly it should be a place for people with at least one thing in common (knowing someone at St Mary's) to come together to share our skills and talents (we all have some, we may not realise it, but we do) and to meet people. You may even find yourselves enjoying it! In this vein some events should be parent oriented not just children.
- It should be inviting. People should be welcome to attend the meetings when they can and commit to as much or as little as they feel able to. Some roles would be for the academic year it is true, others can be more of a project basis so people can commit as much time and energy as they wish and are able to. We will get more from this the more people we get to participate as well as breaking the load of the work so forward this message on to any other parents you know- there will always be something you can help with and it is your children that will directly benefit from it. Minutes from meetings will be distributed so you needn't miss out if you can't be there and let's get more from the website section too.
- In future maybe we can think about collaboration with other schools for events and ideas too as well as local community involvement leading to sponsorship, support and a real sense of community.

But these are just my thoughts- how about you? What do you think the PTFA should be? How should it be run? Please come to our first meeting on **Wednesday 27th**

January at 7.30pm and help create the best model we can. Bring along a friend and have a cup of tea- what's the worst that can happen?

To get some ideas flowing ahead of the meeting here are some of the events we did at St Martin's- have a look and think whether you would like to attend something like that. If not, why? What would you like to see? There is no such thing as a bad idea. Can you think of something we missed?

- Christmas, Easter and Summer fairs
- Termly discos for the children- Foundation, KS1 and KS2
- Swimathon
- Ice skating day (hiring a portable rink to come to the school)
- Parent's quiz night and dinner
- School carol service and giving tree
- International evening
- Ladies Indulgence days
- Dads events
- Clubs for children and project initiatives- e.g. at St Martin's we funded the installation of raised beds for the school to start an organic gardening project for the school which was curriculum supported- is there something we could do for St Mary's?
- Bonus ball club
- Coffee mornings and cake sales
- Uniform clubs and exchanges
- Visiting groups such as musicians, actors etc for the children, puppet shows etc

What do you think? What is good/bad/missing? Please have a think and bring some ideas to the meeting.

Lastly - you. Please do come to the meetings- help make this what you think it should be- as parents you have a direct investment in this and to each of you I would say that we can benefit from what you can provide. We need people to come to the meetings and contribute, volunteer and keep motivation and attention on this going within the school. As well as your general support we do need to appoint some definite roles to enable to function as we should. So I leave you with the roles we need:

1. Chairperson- someone to steer, organise and liaise and take meetings- this post would be for the rest of the academic year with 'elections' again in September. Requires commitment, dedication, enthusiasm and willingness to liaise with other committee members to keep things on track.
2. Secretary- Principally to take minutes and distribute, help with arrangements for events and meetings and to support Chair and Treasurer and be general point of contact. Again for academic year.
3. Treasurer- Not as bad as it sounds! Mainly to be first signatory on account, oversee payments and receipts on the account and keep file of invoice and records for audit, provide financial updates as meetings as to balance, profits from events etc. Support will be provided to whoever takes this role on as required. For academic year.

4. Vice Treasurer- second signatory on account and to help with banking cash receipts and support treasurer in this role. For academic year.
5. Class reps- ideally two for each class so that responsibility for attending meetings can be split between them- role is to feed back events to other parents in that class and help generate support, find volunteers for events and support specific events. Again for academic year
6. Specific event volunteers- someone to help co-ordinate the Easter fair for example- keep track of who is doing what stall etc, help with arrangements with support from main committee- good for those unable to make definite commitment for whole year- volunteer for what you are comfortable with when you can fit it in- you will always be working with a team.

Come along and ask any questions you may have about the roles-there will be no pressure and let us know what you can contribute- what we need most is support, dedication and communication, no prior experience necessary. All of us have excellent life skills and experience we can utilise- all of us.

I really look forward to seeing all of you, if you can't come please review the minutes that will be circulated to you.

Hope to see you on the 27th,
Leanne Oxley