

Dear Parents/Guardians,

**Newsletter – October 2019**

September seems to have flown by and now as the leaves begin to change and the temperature drops, we know Autumn has well and truly arrived. I am really proud of the way the children have applied themselves in the first five weeks of term and it is thanks to you, working in partnership with us, that has ensured a successful start.

**Macmillan**

Last Friday, the Houlton community held a Macmillan coffee afternoon which raised **£471** for this fantastic cause. Thank you for helping us support this event; the children all enjoyed a cake and a break from afternoon lessons.

**Friends and Family Fundraising**

We have confirmation that the F.A.F. of St Gabriel’s last year raised **£2,582** for the school across six events, enabling us to subsidise three trips and develop the willow structures in our Wild School area. A huge thank you to all of the team!

**Harvest**

We are once again seeking to gather a ‘harvest’ this Autumn to support our local **foodbank**. Donations are welcome next week. You should have received a separate letter which sets out details of the items to bring in.

**Homework**

We are so pleased with the pupils’ response to homework and home reading over the past week. Your support is vital in ensuring these key skills are practised at home. If you have any problems with login details, please let your child’s class teacher know.

**Events Calendar**

Can be found at: <http://stgabrielshoulton.org.uk/events/>

**Home School agreement**

Please read this simple document which can be found at: <http://stgabrielshoulton.org.uk/home-school-agreement/>

**Cold Weather Clothing**

As the temperature drops, please ensure any coats, hats, gloves, scarves are clearly named so that they can be returned should they be lost.

**Attendance and Punctuality**

Our overall pupil attendance for the first five weeks of term has disappointingly dropped to just below 95%. Avoidable absences are very disruptive to a child; **even a 5%** absence rate across a year means a whole morning’s learning lost every two weeks. Requests for absence must be put in writing for the attention of Mr Taylor as far in advance as possible and will only be authorised if the circumstances are exceptional. Please note holidays during term time **will not be authorised**. Equally, it is very important for the children to be **on time** in the mornings, so they can enter the school with their peers and have a calm start to the day. Please aim to arrive at or just before **8:45am** so that unforeseen delays / traffic will not result in your child being late (**from** **9am**). We are delighted that **110** pupils currently have **100%** attendance and thank you for your support in making this happen!

**School meals**

A reminder that from October Half term, we will be slightly increasing the price of school meals for children in Years 3-6 by 5p to **£2.35** This represents a 2% increase since the start of last year and ensures the school can cope with rising costs.

**Kenyan Visitor**

On Thursday 10th October, St Gabriel’s is excited to welcome Canon Peter from Kapsabet in Kenya who will be working alongside Reverend Gold to learn about our school as he shares his culture and role with us.

**Topics**

Pupils are learning about the following topics at the moment and for the coming weeks.

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| **Autumn Term** | |
| **King Class** | All About Me |
| **Bell Class** | Rugby: Our Famous Town |
| **Braille Class** | Here and There |
| **Hopper Class** | Food and Farming |
| **Jackson Class** | Groovy Greeks |
| **Gutenberg Class** | Shakespeare’s Stratford |

**Educational Visits**

We believe in the value of learning opportunities which can be found outside of the classroom. In addition to local, off-site visits around Houlton, each class has planned **two** activities relating to their topics this year. Details will come to you nearer the time. I can also highlight that we have arranged a whole-school visit to our local theatre in Rugby at Christmas and have plans for residential visits for Years 5 and 6.

**Upcoming Dates**

Week Beginning 07/10/19 – Harvest festival

10/10/19 – Canon Peter visit

14/10/19 – Pupil photographs

23/10/19 – Autumn Disco 5pm (Lower school) 6pm-7pm(Upper School)

24/10/19 – New to Reception 2020 Open evening 6pm

25/10/19 – School closed to pupils (Staff training)

28/10/19 – Half Term Break

**Mr Taylor’s Half Marathon**

On Sunday 13th October, I am running 13.1 miles to raise money for The Ambulance Staff Charity; a group which supports paramedics and ambulance service staff through difficult times. I’m sure many of us have benefitted from the work of these everyday heroes. Any donations would be most welcome by clicking [here](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/andrew-taylor152) or there is a collection box in the office. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. A. Taylor

Headteacher

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