

St Mary's C.E. Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr Calvin Henry



September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Voluntary Contribution Fund

We hope that you and your children have settled into the autumn term well.

We are writing to update you on the financial pressures facing St Mary's and to appeal for your help to maintain the high quality education that our school consistently offers. We appreciate that you are all extremely busy and, in these difficult times, that some of you may also be finding your own financial pressures more challenging than ever. But we would be grateful if you could please take a few minutes to read this important letter and consider our request.

Background & Context

As you will be aware, Government funding cuts and the last 18 months of managing the COVID-19 epidemic and lockdown have put significant financial pressure on all state schools, including St Mary's. We face the issue of increased National Insurance and pension costs and only partial funding from the government to cover the statutory increases in teacher and support staff pay. Falling rolls in Haringey have left also St Mary's with a funding gap because, with a mostly two-form entry rather than three-forms throughout, we receive considerably less income from the Local Authority. This is combined with having fewer children on our school roll each year and therefore lower levels of funding each year.

Against this landscape of rising costs, the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team have used all their endeavours to explore ways to address these budgetary challenges, by minimising costs and maximising income, all the while ensuring there is no detriment to provision for your children.

The Buildings Maintenance Scheme

You may be aware that governors of Voluntary-Aided (VA) schools such as St Mary's have a legal responsibility to support the maintenance and improvement of its school buildings and premises. This is managed by being part of the London Diocesan Board for Schools' Buildings Maintenance Scheme in which governing bodies of VA schools are required to pay an annual contribution to support large scale maintenance and repair works. This governing body financial contribution falls outside of our school's main budget given to us by the Department for Education and is approximately £13,000 per year, determined by pupil numbers.

How does the fund work?

The school can apply to the fund for 100% of any large scale works that are needed (eg a new school kitchen or major roof repairs) which can cost many times more than our £13k contribution into the annual fund. Such an application is then prioritized against major projects in other VA schools, and approved as necessary. For example, we could pay in £13k a year to then apply to get a capital works project of £100k fully funded such as required. This fund effectively works like an insurance policy for the school and serves to ensure that we are able to provide the best possible learning environment for your children.

How has the school benefited from the LDBS Buildings Maintenance Scheme in the past?

Recent examples of when we benefited from the fund included the replacement of our school kitchen and windows at Church Lane and the replacement of part of the school roof at Rectory Gardens. Fortunately, the required funds through the LDBS covered all of these costs which would otherwise have had to come from our main school budget and which would have been many times more than our contribution to the fund.

How has the fund been managed in the past?

As stated, school governors have an obligation to raise the money for the fund from the parent body but in the past, have chosen not to directly ask for contributions, but instead, have paid the contribution from the school's

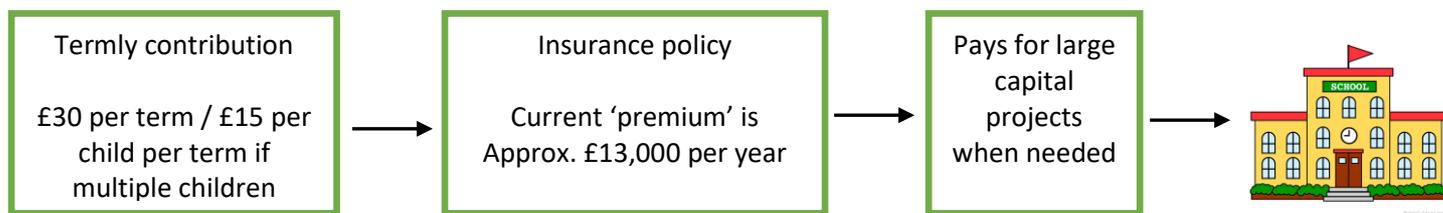
budget. However, due to the ever tightening grip on school finances, we cannot sustain paying into the fund ourselves and can no longer rely on the school budget to cover the c.£13,000 per year that is needed.

What contributions are needed going forward?

Historically at St Mary's and when children start school in the early years, parents are asked to consider making an annual or a termly voluntary contribution to our school and we are hugely grateful to those of you who continually do so. It is however important that we are explicit and transparent about the maintenance fund and how it is used. Also, and like the majority of other voluntary aided schools, we would now like to ask for parents and carers, where at all possible, to provide a regular voluntary donation to help support our buildings maintenance fund. If parents are not able to contribute in full, the balance of the £13,000 will have to come from school funds. This will have a major impact on our school budget and adversely impact on what we are able to provide for our children.

How can you contribute?

We would like to ask if you could please consider making a voluntary contribution of **£30 per term**, or **£15 per child per term** if you have more than one child in our school.



How to set up your regular termly donation:

Set up standing order - The easiest way contribute to the fund is to set up a termly standing order with your bank. You can do so through your online bank account, using the following details:

*Lloyds Bank
Acc no: 05722500
Sort Code: 30-99-86
St Mary's CE Primary School*

If you are planning to donate, please notify the School Business Manager, Helen Hutchings by email to hhutchings@stmarysn8.co.uk. This will greatly assist with auditing purposes.

Other donations:

If you would be interested in making a one-off and/or larger donation, or have any contacts with businesses or funding organisations who might be interested in helping the school directly, please use the same bank details and also get in touch with Helen Hutchings.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this important letter. We do hope you will be able to find the means to help support the school and of course, we fully understand if you feel that, at this point in time, you won't be able to contribute.

This is a purely voluntary request and we know that not everyone will be able to help even if they wanted to. If you have any further questions on any aspect of this letter, please feel free to email either of us at your convenience.

Many thanks for your support,

Best wishes

Calvin Henry.

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