



Building Each Other Up in Love and Learning

Monday 27th November 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Trips, school journeys and workshops

One of the matters that arose during the Vision meeting last week was the condition of the school's finances. As you are probably aware, education budgets have been cut to the bone and all schools are struggling to make ends meet. We are using up our historical reserves for the third year running and the pot will almost certainly be empty by the end of March. We are lucky that these reserves have enabled us to maintain our level of educational provision, in particular to protect our staffing levels.

At St Stephen's we take pride in the breadth of our curriculum where classroom learning is supported by learning outside the school. By law, schools are not allowed to charge for trips and workshops but they are permitted to ask for voluntary contributions - we cannot only take children from families that make a contribution towards a trip. Indeed, we would never want to exclude a pupil from any school activity because of their family's financial position.

In the past families have been really good in their response to requests for contributions so that trips and workshops have generally broken even. However, recently we are seeing a mismatch between those responding positively through Google and the money we actually collect. While this might have been attributable to the hiccup with Spider in the spring term, the trend has continued through the summer and into this autumn term when no trip has been fully covered by the contributions we have received.

Please can you check that you are up to date with your contributions.

It is with regret that I have to write now to warn you that we may have to cancel trips and workshops where we see insufficient contributions from families. This is not anything we want to do but we need to use our limited financial resources carefully be fair to everyone in the school.

Kind regards,

Tony Dixon
Finance Chair

