



FINSTALL FIRST SCHOOL



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HEADTEACHER: Mr Stuart Evans

We care, we share, we learn and achieve

7th February 2018

Dear Parents,

Voluntary Contributions

I am writing to provide you with some information about requests for voluntary contributions from parents, which go towards paying for various additional educational activities that take place during the School year.

As you know, during the School year, a wide variety of activities take place in School that supplement and enrich the curriculum in order to make it as stimulating, enjoyable and memorable as possible for the children. Different Schools adopt different policies about the activities they request that parents contribute towards.

Whenever we ask for voluntary contributions towards trips or activities, it really is a contribution. The School always pays towards the cost and, in many cases here at Finstall, the School meets the whole cost of many activities for which other Schools ask parents to contribute.

For example, unlike a lot of Schools, we never ask for parents to contribute towards the many visiting “animateurs,” who bring various topics alive for the children as well as other trips and activities such as those listed below:

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| Year R – | The Pirates and the Deep Blue Sea Show (£200) |
| Year 1 - | Victorian Sea-side Special (£200) |
| Year 2 - | Samuel Pepys (£170)
Medieval Knights and Castles (£200) |
| Year 3 - | Titus Flavius Lustus (Roman Soldier) (£300)
Annie the House Maid (Victorians) (£200) |
| Year 4 - | St John’s Ambulance First Aid Training (£135)
Bell-boating Journeys, Bell-boating After-School Clubs and the Regatta (£500)
Visiting the Pantomime at the Baptist Church (£150)
Anglo-Saxon / Viking Day (£200) |



In addition, we do not ask parents to contribute towards the cost of all the visiting artists who work with the children during Arts Week (£1,600) or for the annual pantomime style show (£750), which is usually performed in the hall to the whole School at the end of the first half of the Spring term.

Activities such as these really enrich the curriculum for your children but we would be able to meet the statutory requirements of the curriculum without them.

Donations from the PA have, typically, also been used to pay for the coaches to the annual Christmas theatre trips for all year groups to greatly reduce the amount of the voluntary contributions that we request for such trips.

With regard to Swimming in Year 3, since the new Dolphin Centre was opened, the new management has insisted that all groups must be coached by their own staff. As a result, the cost of swimming has increased by £200 / term. This cost was not passed on to parents for this term but we will not be able to sustain this for the Summer term without a small increase to the voluntary contribution and unless a higher percentage of parents provide the voluntary contributions requested. Alternatively, we could remove one of the other additional activities from the curriculum and use this funding to supplement the swimming sessions.

In summary, I would like to reiterate that voluntary contributions are voluntary and parents do not have to contribute if they do not wish to. Also, individual children would never be excluded from activities because parents have been unable or unwilling to make voluntary contributions. However, as we are finding that an increasing number of parents are not making voluntary contributions at a time when School budgets, particularly in Worcestershire, are being greatly reduced in real terms, this could impact on all of the children as we would have to consider the following:

- Reducing the additional activities that enrich the curriculum
- Cancelling trips / visits when we have not received a high enough percentage of voluntary contributions
- Reducing swimming sessions to one term for the whole of Year 3 and then only continuing with swimming sessions for those children who are still learning to swim (i.e. cannot yet swim 25 metres)

I trust that you understand that we are trying to provide wonderful and memorable learning experiences for your children and to teach them important life skills but this is not sustainable in the present financial climate without the support of parents. I hope that I have provided you with a fuller understanding of what we offer, and of the predicament we are faced with, and that parents will continue to support the School and their children as they have done for so many years before.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Evans
Head Teacher

