



27th April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers of Year 4 Children,

I hope that you and your family had a relaxing Easter break and were able to enjoy the easing of some restrictions. We were lucky with some beautiful sunshine towards the end of the holidays.

Usually I would be writing this letter at the start of the academic year, but of course, like so many other things, Covid-19 has impacted our arrangements. At Barrow Hedges we have always sought to provide an engaging curriculum and school trips and visitors into school certainly add interest and bring our learning to life. It is for this reason that throughout these difficult times, we have done our utmost to continue to provide our usual 'Engage' activities and workshops where this has been possible. For example, Year 4's Roman Day in September and Saxon Workshop in March. Hopefully you will have seen in Hedgelines the many ways that we have enriched our curriculum. So, with the gradual return to normality, we are delighted to now be able to plan trips/workshops. We have confirmation that external school trips can recommence from 21st June.

In addition to confirming arrangements for Year 4's school trip, I thought it would also be useful to remind you of how school activities are funded.

PTA Funded Activities

You will know that we have a very active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) who work hard raising thousands of pounds and this money benefits every child in the school community. In previous years, money raised by the PTA has been used to fund the following annual events for Barrow Hedges children:

- Creativity Week resources, visitors, performances (all children) – *plans for 2021 currently being reviewed given the pandemic/catch up curriculum.*
- National Sports Week – June
- Pantomime for all children - January
- Tennis lessons (Year 4 and 5)
- SATs breakfast (Year 6)
- Strictly Come Dancing (Year 6 children)

In addition to this, funds raised by the PTA come directly into school to purchase resources and equipment. Over the past few years, examples include:

Scooter rack, furniture for the Discovery Hub and Infant Area, playground sheds and shelving and additional resources for history/geography, Interactive Whiteboard for an additional teaching space, signage for safety around the school, Year 6 leavers' gifts, Christmas tree, fridge, mural in corridor and resources for Nursery and Reception.

Obviously the past year has adversely impacted the PTA's ability to fundraise, especially since we have

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Harbury Road Carshalton Surrey SM5 4LA

Telephone 020 8643 4428

office@barrowhedges.com

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been unable to have our Summer Fete this year and last. We are excited to be writing to parents shortly about how the PTA plan to spend funds on some exciting projects.

School Trips and Visitors

The following activities have been organised for **Year 4** children and we ask that parents fund the cost of these. We are very conscious of the fact that this is a sensitive aspect of school life, especially during these difficult times. We do our very best to ensure that such trips and visits into school are not too costly. Before the pandemic, for example, we utilised public transport for some of our school trips to keep the costs of the trips down and to encourage our children to use sustainable forms of transport. We have always considered the age of the children and the appropriateness of arrangements. With regards to Covid, we currently feel that travel by coach is safer all round.

More detailed information about the trip to Bough Beech will be sent out in a separate letter.

We have not yet had final confirmation that swimming is able to go ahead but we are doing our best to arrange this. Ordinarily our Year 3 cohort swim for the whole of the summer term and continue through to the Autumn Term of Year 4. This means that your child has missed out on this due to the pandemic but we are currently awaiting information from Westcroft to ascertain whether we can provide these lessons – we will write to you in due course.

Wider Opportunities is a highly successful programme which is an integral part of our music curriculum for Year 4. As part of our vision and values, we ensure that every child at Barrow Hedges learns to play the violin or cello. This year has been no different and we know that the children have been enjoying their lessons on a Wednesday afternoon. As a school, we fund the provision of specialist teachers from the borough Music Service but ask for a contribution from parents towards this excellent activity.

Year 4		
Roman Day	September	£5.20
Saxon Workshop	March	£5.20
Bough Beech Reservoir	June	£9
Wider Opportunities – Violin & Cello	All year	£25
Swimming	Summer Term	£20

School Fund

Each year we are extremely grateful to those of you who make a voluntary contribution towards School Fund via Parent Pay. In light of the information above, you may be wondering why we ask for this contribution. The answer is that this fund enables us to enrich the curriculum throughout the year to add interest and excitement to *lessons*. Examples of this include the purchase of ingredients for Design Technology lessons, materials for Science lessons and specialist media for Art. The fund also pays for some of the transportation used for external sports events and competitions. In short, the aforementioned PTA funded events could be considered as “*optional extras*” whereas the School Fund resources described here enable us to make lessons more memorable and help us to make them even more engaging and practical. The costs for such resources are beyond the essentials met through our delegated budgets. You will be aware of the extreme pressures on school budgets across the country and I am sorry to confirm that this is no less the case for Barrow Hedges. A few parents have asked if they can contribute more to School Fund and the answer is ‘yes, thank you!’ The support and generosity shown by families certainly makes such a positive difference to the children’s learning.

Kind regards,



Louise Wood
Headteacher