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5th March 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

Storm Emma

What a difference a day makes and in this case a few days makes! We are back to the weather we know and like to complain about. We would like to thank the many parents who had very kind and appreciative words to say in what were challenging circumstances. St Francis' was committed to keeping the school open from Wednesday to Friday and made daily decisions based on the forecast that day and also what we could see. We wanted as much as possible to keep the learning consistent and realize that parents need to go work and need their children to go to school. This was also an opportunity for us to test our whole school communication. As a result, I want to clarify a few points. **If there is every a change to the school day such as not opening or closing early we will always send that information out to you.** We do not expect you to guess. So as soon as the information is made which is usually by 7:00 because staff need to get into the school and assess the situation; we will communicate that to you. Our admin team were inundated with the amount of phone calls to check to see if the school was open on Wednesday even though we hadn't text to say there was any change to the school opening and to ask if it was closed on Thursday and Friday when we had already texted this information. I would ask a few things of parents to aide communication and the smooth running of the school day during quite challenging days such as we had last week. **Firstly, please ensure we have your up to date mobile number, secondly please check your phone for messages before you call the school and thirdly please do not block the school lines to check/ask about the same information we just released via text.** Communication works both ways and we want to share information as inefficiently and concisely as possible with you, but equally we need you to receive the information and act accordingly. If you think there is anything we could have done to improve the communication over the last few days we are more than happy to hear your suggestions.

World Book Day - Dressing Up

Unfortunately, due to the weather conditions last Thursday we had to cancel World Book Day. This was because the children often dress up in thin shoes, particularly the girls who will wear ballerina pumps with no grips with their outfit for the day and also because the costumes are not usually insulated and with the subzero temperature it would have been inappropriate to have the children wear their costumes. At the time of making the decision we were not able to say to a certainty if or when we might be able to re-schedule World Book Day hence our communication that it was cancelled.

I was disappointed with the reactions we received from a hand full of parents. I would like to clarify that we do not make decisions to upset children or to inconvenience parents. So it was extremely disappointing to have parents ask if we would reimburse them for their child's costume and to insist that we tell their children because they would be so disappointed. In the grand scheme of things with



Newham London

Headteacher: Ms Natasha Scott



the amount of illness, violence and suffering in the world I think we need to consider ourselves lucky if not dressing up for World Book Day was the most difficult conversation we had to have with our children last week.

Since our initial text we have been able to review the school diary and are able to move World Book Day to Friday, 13th April. Unfortunately, we could not make this any earlier because we currently have a short half term and could not fit it in before the Easter holidays. I hope you will join us in supporting this day as it is a lovely day for the children and staff.

CAFOD Lenten Appeal

Poverty is not a part of God's plan. As Catholics we should not give up on the poorest people. The aim is to **'give it up'** this Lent to support CAFOD in the work they are doing to fight hunger and malnutrition in Zimbabwe. The children will have an assembly on Wednesday 28th February, with a representative from CAFOD, who will share the story of Marian who did not have enough to feed her family which resulted in her older son, Tawanda, being malnourished. CAFOD partners trained Marian and her community to set up and maintain a vegetable garden. Now, she and her neighbours can feed their families and make an income. Her youngest son, Svondo, is growing up strong and healthy.

After the assembly, each child will be given a **'Give it up'** envelope and encouraged to choose something like sweets; crisps, or any other treat, give it up and donate the money they save. These envelopes should be returned with their donations by **Friday, 9th March, 2018.**

This year, for every pound donated to CAFOD, the UK Government will contribute a pound, up to a total of £5 million. Let us work together to take on the challenge **'to give it up'**

Operation Encompass

St Francis' has been given the opportunity to take part in a project that will be run jointly between schools and Newham Borough Metropolitan Police.

Operation Encompass is the reporting to schools before 10am on a school day when a child or young person has been involved or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening.

Operation Encompass will ensure that a member of the school staff is able to liaise with the police and to make use of the information that has been shared, in confidence, while ensuring that St Francis' is able to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children, or their families, who have been involved in, or exposed to, a domestic abuse incident.

We are keen to offer the best help and support possible to all our pupils and we believe this will be extremely beneficial in effectively meeting the needs of the children and families involved.

Class Assembly

There will be a class assembly for **2A on Friday, 16th March 2018 at 9:05 am;** parents with children in this class are warmly welcome.

N. Scott
Head Teacher

