



GOVERNORS' NEWS

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WELCOME to a new school year!

As Chair of Governors I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all families new to the school, as well as welcoming back our existing families. One of the factors that makes our school such a happy and successful place is the thriving team spirit encapsulated in our school logo "**United in Learning**". Our school community is made up of many teams: Mrs Kilpatrick and her leadership team, the governors, the teachers, the support staff, the children and of course you, their families. There are many opportunities for you to get involved, to support your children and to contribute to the team spirit. The three sections below, "**Helping in and around the classroom**", "**The PTA**" and "**Being a School Governor**" give you some information on how you could share a little of your expertise, enthusiasm and spare time with us.

Being a School Governor – the formal side of school life

This is the most formal and structured way of being involved in the school on a voluntary basis. The 14 member governing body works as a collective team overseeing all aspects of school life: the effectiveness of the leadership and management, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the outcomes for pupils, and their personal development, behaviour and welfare. It is an interesting and fulfilling role, and a vital component to the smooth and successful running of the school.

This may sound like a daunting task, but there are well-established guidelines, structures and procedures in place and regular training and briefing opportunities, both for new and existing governors, to keep us informed about best practices and any new initiatives or requirements. Only a few of our governors are actually education specialists; the strength of the governing body team is that each of us contributes our own expertise, experience and perspective. The most important factors are understanding the governing body's roles and responsibilities and being willing to commit to these pro-actively. We do require all our governors to sign up to a Code of Conduct recommended by the National Governors Association and to commit to role.

How much time is involved? In essence, there are 6 evening meetings of the full governing body during the school year, plus one meeting per term for the committees (Resources and Curriculum) and some additional visits and meetings on specific aspects, with all meetings being notified well in advance. We do recognise that governor duties have to dovetail in with other work and personal commitments, but equally we expect all governors to contribute to the successful working of the governing body team.

Regular governor vacancies occur as and when individuals reach the end of their 4 year term of office, or move away from the area, or simply onto other things. We have **3 parent governor vacancies** this academic year, so maybe this is a role you would like to consider putting yourself forward for?

Nomination forms will be sent out in the next couple of weeks, but I would welcome chatting informally about the role beforehand with anyone who is interested. Please leave your name with the school office staff and I shall get in contact with you.

Mary Liming, Chair of Governors

The PTA – the social side of school life

The PTA is parent led and is responsible for organising and running events and activities which give the Infant and Junior School families the opportunity to get together socially. There may be events for adults (such as quiz nights), for the children (such as discos) and whole school events (such as summer or winter fairs). Most PTA events also raise money for the school, an aspect which is really welcomed in these current times when school budgets do not stretch as far as we would like. In recent years, the PTA has contributed towards creating exciting new playground facilities with the impressive new climbing apparatus, to providing additional IT equipment and to enhancing our wonderful library facilities. None of these would have been possible without the involvement and help of parents through the PTA.

The PTA exists for **all** families in the Bernards Heath school community. We are rarely short of volunteers to help out for the odd hour here and there at events, but to be successful in addition there really needs to be a small group of enthusiastic parents to take the lead, at very least: a main **spokesperson** to liaise with Mrs. Kilpatrick, a **secretary** to communicate with parents and publicise events, and a **treasurer**.

Although led by parents, the PTA operates in close liaison with Mrs Kilpatrick to ensure that all activities meet with health and safety requirements and do not clash with other school events such as information evenings for parents, concerts, plays, etc.

Could you spare a bit of your time and energy to help re-vitalise our PTA? The more parents involved, the more events can be run and the more vibrant our school community can become. Come and talk to Mrs Kilpatrick, either as an individual or as a group of parents, if you would like to set this in motion.

(For some useful tips and guidance on PTAs visit: <http://www.pta.org.uk/PTAs/Start-a-PTA>)

Helping in and around the classroom

Bernards Heath is very lucky to have a strong and dedicated team of teachers and teaching assistants who ensure your children have access to a wide and enriched curriculum, but they cannot do it all alone - they need you to get involved. Parent involvement contributes greatly to the children's success and helps to create a healthy, effective and thriving school environment. Often teachers want to ask parents for help, but do not know who to ask. So, we are asking you to get in contact with your child's teacher and let them know if you can help in any way. Here are some ideas how....

One of the easiest and most valued ways is to come in for half an hour slots (maybe at the start or towards the end of the school day) to listen to children read. Or, if you enjoy the creative side of school life, you could offer to help during Art or Design and Technology lessons where an extra pair of hands is often very much appreciated. Perhaps you could help 'behind the scenes' making props for a play, or could spare a little time occasionally cutting out resources for a specific task? Do you have a particular skill or qualification or work experience? If you're a scientist, for example, you could do a demonstration; if you're a historian, you could talk on a topic; if you're a baker, you could make use of our children's kitchen; if you are keen on a particular sport, maybe you could set up or help run an extra-curricular club for the children? Whatever your talent, the teachers will be interested to know about it.

The school prides itself on being able to offer the children a wide range of sporting activities, including many opportunities to compete against other schools. However, the 'away' fixtures rely on the goodwill of parents to transport pupils to and from these events. Maybe you could help with this? Or you could accompany your child's class to their weekly swimming lesson in Hatfield, or on a school trip out?

There are many and varied possibilities. The school would love you to help in any way you can, whether as a one-off occasion or on a regular basis. Please contact your child's class teacher to discuss how you can support the school and the children. Many thanks.