

2nd October 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends

Re: All Years – Friends of The Holt

I am writing first of all to thank you for all your support to date. Thanks to the generosity of Friends of The Holt, we have been able to deliver some amazing and much needed changes to our site over the summer to support our growing school community. Many of you continue to give generously by standing order to support our work to deliver projects which would otherwise never come to fruition. Thank you, Friends!

As you may recall, the school has been growing by 30 students per year as our increased admission number of 240 works its way through the school. We will be making another 30 student places available in each of the next 2 years, in addition to the extra 90 we have taken over the last 3 years, so we needed additional teaching spaces and an expanded student support facility to meet this increased demand.

We have sadly not been successful in our recent bids for government funding to build a new dance and drama studio and therefore decided, with contribution that Friends had put aside for that project, to take matters into our own hands. We are delighted to report that we now have a new, 'purpose built' Student Support centre able to accommodate the needs of all of our students both now and in the future. We have converted our senior library (little used since the creation of a separate 6th form building) into a fantastic new state-of-the-art drama hall. Finally – we have 2 brand new classrooms all kitted out and ready to go.

The pandemic has had a profound effect on us all and it has been particularly tough for our students. It has also had a significant impact on our finances. Our lettings business, which has traditionally earned us over £60k per annum, had to shut down completely during lockdown and is only slowly starting up again. Our much-enjoyed fund-raising activities also came to a standstill – no Quiz, Auction, or Colour Run last year - and our fantastic Christmas Fair, the jewel in the Friends' fundraising crown, is unlikely to be able to go ahead this winter. The costs of the additional measures we have introduced to protect the community against COVID -19 have been significant – with no expectation that we will receive any additional funding.

We really want to create more all-weather outdoor areas for our students! COVID-19 has really brought home to us the importance of getting out into the fresh air during breaks and at lunch times. We have booked marquees to facilitate it this winter, as we strive to keep students protected from the elements whilst keeping them all in their year-group 'bubbles'...but we would really like to create something more permanent. We have already undertaken initial investigation into how we can create covered spaces using canopies and semi-permanent structures – but at this stage do not have funds available from our government funding to progress this, and will need to fund-raise ourselves.

We are working with Friends of The Holt to design and cost our proposals and have a target of £50k to raise for this project. I know the Friends are anxious to share further details of these with you very soon - the Just Giving page is set up and ready to receive your donations to the campaign – please can you help?

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/canopies>

We are also immensely grateful to those parents who support us with regular donations to Friends of The Holt by standing order. This really helps us to provide those extras that would otherwise be unaffordable. If you don't already do this, please do consider it: all the details on how to do this are on our website which you can access via the below link:

<https://www.holtschool.co.uk/parent-information/friends-of-the-holt-school/>

All your donations, whether via the Justgiving campaign or by standing order, will be eligible for Gift Aid, meaning we will claim back 25p for every £1 donated.

If you have any questions, or would like to join the work of the Friends, please do let us know.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Yours sincerely



Sian Lehrter
Business Director